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THE REAL RHYTHM IN  
ENGLISH POETRY

*BY THE SAME WRITER*

MINT SAUCE: being Essays chiefly on  
Music, to enlighten the Ignorant, and  
amuse the Enlightened. (DAVIES.)

SOUND AND MEANING IN ENGLISH  
POETRY. (CAPE.)

# THE REAL RHYTHM IN ENGLISH POETRY

BY

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A large portion of Chapter I. has appeared in *Music and Letters*,  
whose Editor I sincerely thank.

## CHAPTER I.

### RHYTHM IN GENERAL.

JUST as celestial geometry may condition our reason, so it is not unlikely that the motion of the constellations may form the model of our rhythmic sense. Modern science seems to agree with Plato. Rhythm links the whole world together. The planets fly round in the heavens with punctual rhythm. All vegetation has its periods of growth and blossoming, fruit bearing and decay. Plants and flowers move rhythmically, following the sunlight, every daisy on the lawn telling the time as faithfully as the shadow on a dial. The moon dances round the earth in strict time with the tides for a partner, and creatures in the sea no less than plants on land live a rhythmic life. The sun spots recur in an eleven-year rhythm, which the growth rings in trees chronicle. Not only our hearts and our lungs keep time, we cannot walk or run or play or work without marking some rhythm. Insurance companies grow rich on the rhythm of human casualties, and doctors can rely on the rhythm of epidemics. Trade has its known and calculable periods of activity and depression. Everything that moves, or lives, or decays, does so rhythmically. Rhythm is one of the conditioning facts in our mentality. If the stars took to whims, we should be as different from what we are as if two and two made five.

We can remain unconscious of this universal rhythm only when it is unbroken. We know our stride is rhythmic when we walk with someone whose rhythm won't fit. In hockey there is a precise moment for "taking" the ball on a pass, or for hitting it, and we alter our step, our "time",

to receive or pass the ball at the beginning of the "bar", so to speak. As an effective trick for getting away when tackled, we strike out of time; our opponent calculates on our striking at the proper moment, and is baulked by the sudden syncopation. A forward line with perfect combination is a thoroughly rhythmic whole; the players know each other's rhythm. Common action is always rhythmic, impossible, indeed, without rhythm. In work on the harvest field that has to be done in close concert, women cannot work successfully with men, because their rhythms differ. It tires the man to shorten his rhythm and the woman to lengthen hers. Though heavy work may make a man labour unrhythmically, immediately a companion comes to help, the work becomes rhythmic.\* We can hear this rhythm "born of consent",\* as Francis Gummere called it, any sunny day in spring-cleaning time.

What then, psychologically considered, is rhythm? It has been thought both a perception and an emotion.† The rhythm of the moon or the seasons is neither; we perceive the moon's rhythm, and we may both perceive and feel the rhythm of a Scottish reel. But since rhythm is such an all-pervading and such a formative thing, I think we ought not to define it as either a perception or a feeling, though we can both perceive and feel it. It is not so much something that we feel or see, as something that we do. Any movement persisted in tends to become rhythmic, even if we deliberately try to keep it irregular.‡ All regular or rhythmical movements tend to become automatic.§ Mechanical action, which is the easiest sort of action, is always rhythmic. We are told that to tap arhythmic beats is very tiring and requires "strenuous effort",|| the fatigue and the strenuous

\* *The Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 111.

† *Psychological Review, Monograph Supplement*, June, 1903, pp. 10-12.

‡ Scripture, *Elements of Experimental Phonetics*, p. 525.

§ Wm. M. Patterson, *The Rhythm of Prose*, p. 23.

|| Scripture, *loc. cit.*

effort, I take it, being mental, nervous. The difference between arhythmic and rhythmic action resolves itself into a contrast between action the details of which are necessarily closely controlled by the guiding processes \* of the brain, and action which can continue without that detailed supervision. In fact, we work rhythmically when our overseer mind is free-wheeling.

This holds of mental movement as well as of physical. Our mind in the saddle takes advantage of every declivity. Most people trying to learn a list of syllables without sense, group them rhythmically, each in the rhythm characteristic of themselves.† All common everyday expressions which we use without thought are rhythmic: "How do you do?", "What a nuisance!", "How lovely!", "It's a shame.", "He's an awfully nice fellow.", "When shall I see you again?", "Don't be in such a hurry.", "One can think of tons of them.", "One doesn't know where to stop.". If the words necessary to express the meaning are not rhythmical enough, we cut out a bit. "Does not", "awfully", "do not", are waste of time colloquially; they upset the free-wheel motion. The everyday rhythm of language strikes us in a tongue we cannot understand; it goes unnoticed where speech is listened to for its meaning. Only when the conscious direction of the mind starts do we become arhythmic—when nervous, when the inexperienced mind tries to write a letter and becomes self-conscious and diffident.

Instead of starting with the query why is poetry rhythmical, it seems we should be less paradoxical if we asked why prose is not, where and why does it tend away from regular rhythm. In repeating rhythms with nonsense words,

\* I have inserted "processes" as a sop to psychological feeling; the compliment paid, I intend to use English words, which psychologists have stereotyped in meaning for scientific purposes, as if they were still live parts of English speech. We must all be grateful to psychologists for talking in a tongue we can more or less understand; but we must not allow them to kill the words they borrow.

† C. S. Myers, *A Textbook of Experimental Psychology*, pp. 160-1.

stricter time is kept than in repeating rhythms with significant words.\* Poetry precedes prose in undeveloped peoples. Professor Saintsbury † reminds us of “the extraordinary close connection between Anglo-Saxon prose and Anglo-Saxon poetry . . . the instruments of the two harmonies are nearly identical.” Even Chaucer falls into blank verse in his prose tales.‡ The farther we get from primitive ages the more irregular and differentiated becomes rhythm. Meaning, intellect upsets regular rhythm. The more abstract, unemotional and discretely meaningful, the less rhythmic is prose. One notices it in one’s own writing. Easy, fluent writing comes out rhythmical. Where we have formulated our thought with difficulty, being vividly conscious of the difference between the thought and the expression, and having to force the pen, bit by bit, effort by effort, the result tends to be unrhythmic. The writing won’t go, it lacks motor quality. The words stick, have to be urged out, consciously sought for and consciously arranged ; the brain is not working of itself, but pedalling hard all the time. The writer whose thought is still difficult, or who is discussing facts with the terminology of which he is unfamiliar, or about the relationship of which he is not quite clear, or who is unpractised in the art of expression, or, if practised, has let his pen get rusty, tends to write unrhythmically. Thus scientific text-books and psychological writings quickly tire the reader more accustomed to literature ; the rough ground they cover decides their halts and characterises their gait ; they are not shod with the wings of Mercury. From the other point of view, R. L. Stevenson, among others, notices that

The inexperienced writer, as Dickens in his earlier attempts to be impressive, and the jaded writer, as anyone may see for himself, all tend to fall at once into the production of bad blank verse.§

\* Warner Brown, *Time in English Verse*, p. 69.

† *History of Prose Rhythm*, pp. 10-13.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

§ *Technical Elements of Style*.

That is to say, when the directing faculties of the brain are asleep, their disturbing influence gone, the natural rhythm of the writer comes up ; the sediments of mental activity have settled, the writing has run itself clear.

Music shows the same thing, complicated a little because the appeal of a tune is emotional even when it appeals through the intellect. We can measure the emotion of music either by its quality or by its strength. The emotion produced by the regular rhythm of a street organ is presumably much stronger in a group of dancing children than that felt by staid citizens at a chamber concert. If we estimate emotion by its dynamic quality, the regular rhythms are the stronger. Popular music, or music that appeals *only* to the "low brow" listener, has always a regular rhythm, hence the popularity of the waltz or the march, no matter what their tune. Even jazz music beats a more unyielding rhythm than we usually find in intellectual music, where the so-called "emotional stresses", or irregular accents, soften the tyranny of the equal bar ; and when we measure the emotion of music by its quality, we necessarily imply meaning or intellect as the differentiating factor. While regular rhythms tend to be merely emotional, irregular rhythms have some extra meaning in their emotion by the very fact of being irregular. We may say that the more irregular is the rhythm of music, the more intellectual it will be, or if this is too much, we can at least say that the more the emotion of music is of the sort that appeals to the understanding, the more it tends to an irregularly accented rhythm.

Emotion obviously does not upset rhythm. Undiluted emotion is always rhythmical. An excited child will dance about repeating over and over again the cause of its excitement. Even full-grown people fall into this sort of repetition when unusually moved. The one feeling absorbs them completely ; there is nothing to stop it recurring. The more entire our absorption, the more regular the iteration. If we say, "I wish I hadn't done it, I wish I hadn't done

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it," we are more completely lost in the feeling than if we say, "I wish I hadn't done it, I hate having done it." A single, unrestrained emotion sweeps aside the volitioning, guiding forces of the brain opposed to rhythm. It is obvious why the rhythms of poetry must be simple in comparison with those of prose with its ever-varying, modifying, changing complexity, why poets are more rhythmical in youth than in their full maturity, and why those with predominating intellect tend to write difficult rhythms. It is not so much that emotion makes rhythm, as that it prevents interference with rhythm. We may illustrate farther. Psychologists say that the English \* mind works harder at the beginning of a sentence than at the end, in other words, the difficulty of framing a sentence lies in the first half. Most of us can corroborate this from our own experience. The pen sticks ten times before our first word for once it may stick at the last ; the end of a sentence in natural writing or in speech seems to frame itself. The mental disturbance at the beginning has subsided by the end. The reader's mind follows the writer's in this. A mutilated word is more often noticed and less easily corrected in the first half of a sentence than towards the close, proving that the mind does most of its inception of an idea at the beginning.† Paradoxical though it may seem, this means that the end of a sentence is the more emphatic,‡ emphasis being a matter rather of feeling than of meaning. Though the beginning of a sentence prepares the argument, the end clinches it ; the beginning digs the tunnel and the end beholds the opened vista. Consequently the progress of emotional emphasis in prose or poetry is usually from the beginning to the end of the sentence or line (assuming that the line is a real close). We may say not only that our typical foot is iambic or rising,

\* Or, more strictly, the English-speaking.

† *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XII, p. 98, Bagley, "Apperception of the Spoken Sentence."

‡ As, indeed, the old-fashioned books on "Rhetoric" tell us.

our typical phrase or sentence is iambic or rising in emphasis too. Now, the so-called "inversions" \* and irregularities in the rhythm of blank, and indeed of other, verse occur usually, one might almost say always, at the beginning of the line, where the mind is at work and the emotion weakest, while prose is most rhythmical at the cadences. The results of psychological experiments † agree with this, proving that the close of the line is more important than the opening in giving us a sense of rhythm. Experiments with blank verse, or rather with "iambic pentameters" in the proportion of  $\textcircumflex:\text{—} = 3:4$  ticked on a machine, show that the second half of the line is the more prominent rhythmically; "an irregularity in the time intervals may be greater in the earlier than in the later part of the verse" without being perceived. We feel the rhythm more strongly and are more easily disturbed by an irregularity at the close of the line.

So much for rhythm as an active thing. As a passive experience its nature is not so easily explained. Theories abound. Two are outstanding, the Attention Span and the Kinæsthetic—both very good theories if their supporters were not so exclusive. They ask and answer a different question. Both could be held concurrently, and both, in my opinion, go wrong where they force their physical observations into the region of metaphysics—that rarified atmosphere where brutal facts freeze and fall overboard.

The mind is a wanderer and cannot rest long in one place. Psychologists have tried to determine how long. Although there is some disagreement as to the precise time, the general result seems to be that our mind takes a little less than one-tenth of a second to receive any impression, and that it cannot remain fixed for more than about a second.‡ The

\* Trochaic feet in a line of iambic.

† Stetson, *Harvard Psychological Studies* (1903), Vol. I, pp. 419-21.

‡ McEwen, *The Thought in Music* (c. p. 14), is a convenient place to read about this, or *The Psychological Review, Monograph Supplement*, June, 1903, J. B. Miner, "Motor, Visual and Applied Rhythms."

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cinematograph relies on the slow rate with which we receive visual impressions. The single photographs that make up the moving picture move too quickly for us to detect. Similarly we cannot articulate more than ten or twelve syllables a second, nor can we distinguish a sound which recurs faster than about twelve to the second.\* Or, to put this another way, when things repeat themselves faster than our minds move, we perceive only the general effect of the movement, or the combined result of the sound ; we experience them as one continuous thing, not noticing the empty spaces between. Contrariwise, our minds cannot connect movements too slow, whether we see or hear them. We do not really see the minute hand of our watch creeping round. Bees are unable to detect still quicker movements, as the bee-keeper soon discovers. Such evidence seems to show that our minds move in jerks, or at least that our consciousness is not a continuous stream, but a succession of separate portions of consciousness. The blank portions between the photographs of the moving picture or of a sound recurring faster than about twelve times to the second, cannot register themselves on our mind because the new picture, or the new sound, arrives before we have had time to receive the first one and turn a fresh portion of our consciousness to take the next impression.

Not only our consciousness, our attention too seems to move, if not with disjointed, at least with separate actions. If our attention is very much relaxed, time seems to divide itself into regular intervals. When fevered to the degree where the mind begins to have difficulty in retaining consciousness, our attention flickers at a regular rate. We grasp things in detached efforts. Some one is speaking ; we hear the beginning, we miss something, we hear the end of the sentence. This is possibly only an exaggeration of what happens normally, only that the attention, instead of flickering out, moves on. Perhaps if we had not this lapse of attention,

\* See footnote ‡ on previous page.

we should be as blank idiots, gazing at one thing for ever ; this flicker may be *the* essential to consciousness, *the* motor quality of the mind. We can measure the length of our attention as we can the atoms of our consciousness. The length of our attention, or the space of time we take to group our impressions or perceptions into a unity, is what psychologists call the attention span. The average size of our attention span is about a second.\* This and the half-second make the easiest times to beat.† Although an unsuspecting person asked to count sixty seconds, usually finishes long before the minute is up, yet if we beat at the rate of a second, or a half-second, and ask anyone to continue beating at that rate, this speed is the most likely of any to be maintained correctly ; it is our natural rate. The mind, then, moves in attention spans each representing a completed mental grouping or effort, and takes as it were a little rest, or makes a little break between the spans. Everything that occurs within one span groups itself as a sort of unity, or atom of meaning. Our thoughts and our perceptions progress in attention spans, and, unless we are idiots, must progress. We cannot stretch our attention span very far. "An object that does not change cannot be attended to for more than a few seconds. The attention will pass involuntarily from the object to some one of its parts or to one of its associates."‡ It is as if our mind were a sort of clock, ticking off our experience into one-tenth seconds and seconds, never going back or stopping, but insisting that each second shall cover new ground.

The attention span moves rhythmically, taking impressions at a regular rate. Since our minds move at a more or less uniform average rate, we all have some sense of "an isochronous interval" with reference to which we can estimate time. We live in measured moments, thinking rhyth-

\* Scripture, *The New Psychology*, p. 178.

† Wm. M. Patterson, *The Rhythm of Prose*, pp. 20, 32.

‡ Scripture, *loc. cit.*

mically and experiencing what the outside universe brings us, in a regular rhythm. Though the normal, unexcited attention span is about one second, its size varies with what we attend to,\* and also, presumably, for other reasons. When we are conscious of thinking quickly, our attention span must have a quicker rhythm than with slow thinking. When we listen to music or read poetry, our attention takes the rate of their rhythm.† More than this, it determines our impression of that rate.‡ Music which makes our attention span close in a shorter rhythm than it does normally gives a sensation of quick time; music that makes our attention span broaden out and close in a longer rhythm than the average, a sensation of slow time. Similarly in poetry with a slow or with a quick-moving rhythm. If, however, the music goes *too* quickly for our attention span, we adjust our attention to grasp two musical groupings instead of one within each span, or in musical terms, we have "compound time", a very quick  $\frac{3}{4}$  time giving us an impression of  $\frac{6}{8}$ —a dual not a triple grouping, two groups of three coming within the attention span instead of one group of three.§ Music can vary the rate of our attention span, accelerating or retarding its speed in different ways.||

Although the musical composer has a fairly precise array of symbols to let his speed be known, and poetry has none, yet the poem, too, decides its own rate. Shelley's *tempo* in his longer poems is usually very quick, Wordsworth's very generally pretty slow. But how their poetry determines its *tempo* is a problem, and a fundamental one evidently, since in music too, even if we have no outside indication, any given

\* *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. VI, p. 211; McEwen, *The Thought in Music*, p. 15, footnote.

† *Ibid.*

‡ C. S. Myers, *A Textbook of Experimental Psychology*, p. 308.

§ If — = attention span, and  $X$  = the note or beat, then  $\frac{3}{4}$  time gives an attention span of XXX,  $\frac{6}{8}$  time an attention span of XXX XXX, with a subsidiary feeling of the triple grouping inside.

|| See Appendix I.

piece seems to suggest its own rate. The speed that was appropriate to the mood of the composer tends to be suggested by the mood of the music. We cannot say anything more definite about the *tempo* of poetry. Perhaps some metres go more quickly than others ; perhaps some sequences of sound slip more easily over our lips and through our minds ; sad or gloomy poetry comes more slowly than joyous—the mood suggested by the words suggests the pace ; difficult thought usually lingers more than easy thought. But there is an indefinable something more subtle than all this. Shelley's thought is often difficult, yet this does not impede his speed. It is evident that he often wrote at a furious pace ; his unfinished, or rather never-finishing, sentences, his almost muddled maze of imagery and meaning, the way the thought runs on always continuously though not always consecutively, show hasty writing and communicate hasty reading. The effect is got only so ; read slowly, large portions of Shelley are not Shelley at all ; he loses pitch as much (metaphorically) and becomes as inexplicable as a gramophone record in the same predicament. The reader who cannot read quickly cannot bear Shelley. Wordsworth is a direct contrast ; the reader who cannot bear to go leisurely finds him dull. I think everyone would grant this, and yet—why should it be so ?

If we wish to see changes of *tempo* within a poem, we get plenty of them in *Maud*, from the *allegro* of “ Go not happy day ” to the *andante* of “ I have led her home, my love, my only friend,” or the heavy *largo* of

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead.

Here we could perhaps say that “ Long dead ” was a sort of *augmentation* ; \* as a metaphor we might, if this were not inflammable material, where metaphors are like matches.

Coming to the subject as if from another direction, and

\* Appendix I.

possibly without knowing about the attention span, Mark Liddell arrived at a theory of poetic rhythm that fits the attention span theory. He set out to base the explanation of poetic form on a rhythmic working of our minds,\* and started by noticing that an idea or thought is the sum of many little "thought impulses".† Thus we might say that the idea expressed in "The cat sat on the mat," is the sum of three thought impulses: "the cat", "sat", and "on the mat". We can fit his theory to the attention span theory by saying that the content of an attention span is a "thought impulse". Liddell concludes that in poetry the thought impulses are arranged so that the mind can grasp them on the "systole and diastole system", ‡ in other words, they are arranged rhythmically. The parallelism of Hebrew poetry is rhythmic because it is one of fixed attention, and relaxed attention alternating; in

He brought me up also out of the pit of destruction,  
Out-of-the-miry-swamp,  
And set my feet on a rock,  
Made-firm-my-stepping.§

the hyphenated phrase is the relaxed echo of its companion phrase. Thus the rhythm of the mind reflects itself in the rhythm of the words. He groups thought impulses into phrases, or "thought moments". We think in such groupings, and their rhythm forms the rhythm of poetry. This is part of Shakespeare's CXLVI sonnet divided into thought moments:

Poor soul,  
The centre of my sinful earth,  
Hemmed by these rebel powers that thee array,  
Why dost thou pine within,  
And suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ? ||

\* *Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, p. 147.

† *Ibid.*, p. 85.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-3.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

His thought moment division of Wordsworth's *Intimations Ode*\* is also convincing, though we may wish he had marked the atom thought impulse as well as the larger grouping ; we must take the feet into account as well as the phrase.

Mr. Keary, in *Some Thoughts on the Technique of Poetry*,† recognises the principle of Liddell's theory, though he comes to it from a different angle. He says that the stressed word or the rhymed word should always be the most important in the poem, and quoting a passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, asks us to notice how the stressed words form a perfect skeleton of the stanza. He gives other poetical and also prose examples. Prof. Saintsbury ‡ objects to this, and talks about the "process of staggering from post to post" which it implies. Why it should imply this I do not know. It implies neither any farther stressing of the stressed syllables, nor any farther unstressing or quickening of the unstressed syllables. It does not imply anything different in the reading from what was before. It merely states that the vital words in poetry get the stress, and as a co-relative that we scan by thought impulses, each thought impulse containing a stressed syllable. It is interesting that Saintsbury's method of scanning prose rhythms usually coincides with the thought impulse method. He and Liddell agree—Saintsbury in his practice and Liddell in his theory—as to how we read prose. We ought to scan poetry on a different method only if we read it differently, and can assume we read it differently only after we have shown why and how.

Saintsbury was provoked by the rather ridiculous sack in which this type of thinking is apt to tie itself up. Neglecting the exaggeration that is part of the enthusiasm of a new idea, and the curious attitude that gives us a quasi-chemical

\* *Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, p. 163.

† *The Fortnightly Review*, November, 1906.

‡ *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, pp. 470-1.

formula  $*-x + H.I.^n + V.F.$ —as an explanation of poetry (which would be revolting if it were not funny), we find an instance of it in Liddell's remarks <sup>†</sup> on *Christabel*, in which there happen to be passages which do not fit his scheme—unfortunately for *Christabel*. However much the reader may find himself disposed to agree with Liddell up to this point, here is a check. We simply cannot “cut” *Christabel*. Nor need we. Why postulate *one* type of poetry, or why after discovering the principles on which poetry is written and read, postulate one way of applying them? *Christabel* need not be excluded by Liddell's rule. It plays by contrast on Liddell's and Keary's law. Part of the magic, remoteness, the witchery of it, depends precisely on the emphasis being off the literal meaning; the *thought moments* swing not on what prosaic men call meaning, but on aspects trivial to that meaning. The thought emphasis is remote and unusual:

And Christabel saw the lady's eye,  
And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.

/ indicates the heavier stresses; they do not give a skeleton of the meaning. Even if we take the less heavy ones (//) with them, still we do not have a clean skeleton. Coleridge is thinking only vaguely and in the air, his metrical emphasis is logically wrong. When we read him, our thought emphasis follows the metrical; our minds accent with the rhythm, and the result is an unreal, remote impression; we see things in an unusual way, in a mysterious twilight, with a

\* *Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, Chap. II.

$x$  = thought expression.

$H.I.^n$  = human interest raised to the  $n$ th power.

$V.F.$  = verse form.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 160-2. In discussing this, I have more or less made Keary's or Liddell's ideas coalesce, as one almost necessarily implies the other.

glimmer, a flicker, shimmering and undecided. In itself there is nothing in Christabel's seeing the lady's eye and the boss of Sir Leoline's shield, which hung in an old niche in the wall, there is nothing in these almost arbitrary trifles, to make our hearts suddenly flutter. What chiefly contributes to our panic of apprehension is precisely this dream emphasis. Or again, if we take

The 'lovely maid, and the 'lady tall,

the poetic contrast is between "lovely" and "lady", the alliteration doubly emphasising it, and between "maid" and "tall". The effect is quite different, more airily gracious, more faerily dainty, from the sensation we get with the logical contrast of "The lovely maid and the tall lady". All this, so far from upsetting Liddell's general principle, helps to confirm it. Coleridge can give this effect precisely because Liddell is right. Only if there is a correct emphasis, can Coleridge bewitch us with a wrong one ; there could be no mystification by unusual emphasis if there were no usual emphasis.

Poetry is of two sorts ; one has thought impulses grouped in logical emphasis, the other in non-logical ; or rather poetry has as many *genres* as there are ways in which these two methods of fitting words to thought impulses can co-operate with or oust each other. Liddell may be right in his principle of how we read, wrong only in applying it narrowly.

I propose to discuss the other theory of rhythm from an unsympathetic standpoint—the rightness or wrongness of most ideas depending on how we view them. I do this partly for the sake of variety, and partly because it is a more self-satisfied theory than the Attention Span one, though even it has its self-assertive side. The fluctuations of attention have been described as

Due to cardiac and respiratory movements, but their frequency seems to be independent of the pulse and the breathing.\*

\* C. S. Myers, *A Textbook of Experimental Psychology*, pp. 320-1.

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or they may be due to

those rhythmic changes in blood pressure which are seen in Traube-Hering waves and are due to the rhythmic activity of the vaso-motor centre in the bulb.\*

They might ; but the idea has not been chaired and carried triumphant through the “lab.s” ; it has not yet done us any harm.

The Kinæsthetic theory asks itself why rhythm gives us a sense of motion. It answers that when we listen to rhythmic movement, some muscle in our body or some nerve in our ear moves with the motion of the rhythm. We beat time with our foot, or our eyelids twitch, or a muscle in our arm contracts in time with the music, and so on, our body reflecting the rhythm. In fact our passive reception of rhythm is really an active one. Our bodies dance the rhythm, and this dance is called Kinæsthesia.† We need not go into all the experiments to prove, or attempt to

\* C. S. Myers, *A Textbook of Experimental Psychology*, pp. 320-1.

† A quotation from McEwen, *The Thought in Music*, pp. 12-13, may make the theory clearer :

“ Now the ear is not only the organ of hearing, but in some complex and not very well understood way seems to have much to do with the maintenance of the equilibrium of the body, the sense of space and direction, and even . . . with the co-ordination of bodily movements. The cerebellum, that part of the brain which ‘ appears to be intended for the direct regulation of voluntary movements by sense impressions ’ ‡ is functionally connected with the organ of hearing. ‘ The acusticus is precisely the sensory nerve that gives certain objective sense impressions a specific relation to movement ; our movements adapt themselves involuntarily, in a corresponding rhythm to rhythmical impressions of sound.’ ‡

“ So that it does not seem improbable that a series of auditory impressions recurring rhythmically finds a response in that part of the bodily organism which regulates movement, and are realized in character and in period by the fact that this response is either an actual physical movement or is accompanied by changes in muscular conditions which stand in consciousness as movements. In other words, the perception of the rate of periodicity in a rhythmic succession, like the perception of pitch, is a realization of movements induced by sympathetic vibration.”

‡ Quoted from Wundt, *Principles of Physiological Psychology*.

prove that this is true. The theory has to be expanded to fit the facts, for it is proved that Kinæsthesia does not always accompany rhythm; to explain exceptions the supporters of this theory say that the memory of previous Kinæsthesia gives us the rhythmic sensation.\* Thus each new rhythm we hear arouses Kinæsthesia, though familiar rhythms may have no Kinæsthesia.† Some go on to explain the pleasure we get, and the subjective mood induced, on similar grounds. Mr. Britan ‡ says the physiological processes are made more active by quick, lively music, which is pleasureable, and retarded by slow *tempo*, which produces a feeling of slowed and hindered vitality. On this reasoning I suppose we should say that those who dislike solemn movement have naturally slower "physiological processes" than those who feel rather a calming, cooling, rest-giving effect in slow majestic rhythms.

Now it is to me, personally, and possibly to most lovers of music or poetry, utterly abhorrent to explain the experiences of the spirit by referring them to the activities of the body. Moreover, all those experiments and conclusions prove nothing. It is not incontrovertible that a sense of rhythm does inevitably mean muscular reaction, but even granting that it does, what then? Even if it were proved, as it is not, that Kinæsthesia always accompanies a feeling of rhythm, this might mean, only that the feeling of rhythm always objectifies itself; it does not prove that the objectification precedes or causes the feeling. That Kinæsthesia was most in evidence in learning a new rhythm § is little

\* J. B. Miner, *Motor, Visual and Applied Rhythms*, p. 33.

† *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXIV, p. 359, Ruchmich,  
"The Rôle of Kinæsthesia in perception of Rhythm."

‡ *The Philosophy of Music*, p. 79.

§ This is probably not always true, as one notices that people who beat time, and who cannot help beating time to a familiar Scotch reel, may not beat to a less familiar rhythm, even if it is one easily grasped, like a waltz or a march. Probably the stronger the rhythm, the stronger the impulse to objectify it in Kinæsthesia.

more relevant. It shows that objectification helps in learning, just as spelling aloud helps small children, or some older people can memorise more easily by repeating aloud or by writing. If we go to Wundt \* to find out how the brain is connected with the body, we discover that there is *one* part of the brain in whose penetralia man has never set up his kinema ; we do not know how it works. We are told that the auditory nerves in the brain send off reflexes to the motor muscles ; these reflexes cause muscular contractions, or Kinæsthesia. I gather that the point with reflex action lies in its being reflex ; the nerve acts on its own, without a signal from the brain ; given normal conditions and a sufficient stimulus the reflex action always occurs. If Kinæsthesia were caused by reflex action, it would occur whenever the auditory nerve had a rhythmic impulse, not more in the learning of a new rhythm than after the rhythm were learnt. If we inadvertently plunge a hand into boiling water, the reflex recoil happens not only while we learn the new sensation, but occurs if we follow up the experiment with our other hand. Moreover, this Kinæsthesia theory postulates that it takes longer for an auditory impression to reach the conscious brain than for a muscular. We must suppose that when the auditory nerve hears a rhythm—we are not told to expect Kinæsthesia with every sound, only with a rhythmic series—it sends off reflexes to the muscles, which send back their message to the brain, to arrive at consciousness simultaneously with the impression of the sounds which were rhythmic. This does make us thick headed. It is more probable that the auditory nerve began to agitate the motor nerves when the brain felt that the sounds were

\* *Principles of Physiological Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 183-5 of Titchener's translation. I have stated the fact very unscientifically. On p. 167 he says "it is impossible as things are to put a physiological or psychological interpretation upon many of the structural features of the brain. The functional significance of the most prominent conduction paths, as e.g. the entire intercalatory system that runs to the cerebellum, is still wrapped in obscurity."

coming rhythmically, that the mind made the body dance, and not that the dance of the body was mirrored in the mind.

After all these complexities, it seems stupid to suggest that perhaps rhythm gives us a sensation of movement, because as a matter of fact, rhythm is movement ; it is precisely movement of a certain sort. Making a puzzle of it seems as foolish as asking the *psychological* reason that it appears dark to us, when we put out the candle in a midnight room. To question the findings of physiological psychologists on the grounds of common sense is such a heresy, and the inroads of these gentlemen on our field have become so increasingly disturbing, that it needs the apology of a farther thrust at the assumption behind it all—the William James Paradox. I call it so, not that William James is the school founded on the paradox (for he has too big a mind to be confined within one idea) nor that he set it on a comfortable chair beyond the heckler's reach, but because he suggested it. He \* says that the “coarser emotions”, such as fear and grief, are physical before they are psychological. He proves that the physical condition may induce its appropriate emotion, that if the body has the physical conditions of fear, the mind will feel afraid, even if it has nothing to be afraid of, and he tells a horrid story from his childhood of how he stirred a pail of blood, and though his feelings were utterly callous, his body, apparently more delicate than his mind, fainted from the physical sight. To show that the physical state may induce the psychological does not prove that the psychological may not induce the physical ; while to show that the body can faint from the shock of what the mind did not feel, does not prove the connection between the body and the mind ; it is an exception, and therefore irrelevant. James's chief argument is that if you take away all physical feeling from emotion you have no residual *feeling* left, that we cannot separate horror from its gasp. Perhaps we cannot, but this need mean only that the strong emotions

\* *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, Chap. XXV.

cannot help objectifying themselves. This theory does not leave enough room for control ; it would mean that he is always the worst hurt who cries out most, that fainting from emotional shock necessarily implies an inordinately strong emotion, whereas it may mean only a weak heart. We must remember the extremists on the other side, who say that all physical feeling is first mental, and who have as good a case. To ordinary mortals it seems that neither the Christian Scientist nor the Physiological Psychologist has faced the whole problem ; both have proved a co-relation between the body and the soul, they act in sympathy. The Paradox, which in effect leaves to the mind only the mirror's duty of perceiving how the body feels, is like the Cartesian philosophy that remains renowned for its interest in the mechanism of a dog's bark. It may be a good enough philosophy, but it is a precarious rock for science to build on. The Kinæsthesia theory presupposes it.

The psychological and scientific study of the elements of prosody is of value to literature as long as it remains an auxiliary to prosody. To shut our eyes to facts which it provides is silly, if not cowardly, but it does not follow that everything that comes out of a laboratory too crowded with instruments to tempt imagination to get into the results, is either a relevant fact, or the only fact for prosody. If we must accept proved facts, we need not accept theories, or interpretations of fact in the light of theories, especially when they rest on such assumptions as, that if you know all about the cup you know all about the wine. Perhaps it is ungenerous to say anything against this infant science when most literary people are so unnecessarily snobbish about him. The literary reader in experimental prosody is startled by its air of authoritative, "lab." -marked conclusions, its fictitious attitude of fact. So that, since our snobbishness is three parts a sense of insecurity, our best way of serving the psychological investigator may be to attack him, for we need not really fear him. Just as science, which took the

ground from under the feet of poetry in the last century and made common men prosaic, has now set the universe afloat in the ether and made even common men wonder, so psychology, which is making mere dream of inspiration, turning our poets and geniuses into neurotics with complexes, and testing the magic of poetry with crude machinery, must one day give back to poetry its mystery. The scientist, who shocked the Idealists by saying that all things are material, has probed his material more deeply ; matter is nothing (or mere electricity) and scientific searchers after truth have revealed it. So poetry is Mystery, and psychological searchers after truth must one day reveal it. Scientists and psychologists are sincere men ; they try to know the truth about things ; and truth when it is found cannot harm poetry. Let us welcome the psychologist on our ground, and keep on telling him how foolish he is.

## CHAPTER II.

### OUR METHOD.

WE are going to collate the prosody of poetry with that of music. But there is so much opposition to this, and opposition so dangerous, and from such an august source, that it seems we must preface our attempt by an apology. We are about to enter a highly-peppered atmosphere, and must wear a mask, so we had better start by explaining the principles which protect us. Prof. Saintsbury is our most deadly enemy. If I thought my opinion were of any value, I should write a panegyric on him, for he has said some of the most illuminating things in prosody, and indeed I take what support I can from his authority whenever I can ; but the very strength of my respect for him makes me all the more disappointed when I read his unjust attacks on musical prosodians, and see his championship of what seems to me a dead prosody. We need not quote his tirades against Joshua Steele,\* whose scensions are “absolutely Bedlamite”, nor can we defend ourselves from all the flying kicks aimed at us by this usually generous-minded man. He allows † us to think that he sometimes likes to listen to music, though he does not try to hide his ignorance of it. Indeed, our first quarrel with him is that he does not know enough about music to understand the musical prosodian. He does not know, either what the technical terms of music mean, or when musical prosodians are talking nonsense about music.

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. II, pp. 547-8, 552.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 476.

He is at their mercy and therefore hates them. When he refers to the musical man as one

who is accustomed to the transmogrification of *When the bloom is on the rye* into *When the blee-hoo-hoom is o-ho-hon the rye*,\*

we cannot but sympathise with him, but that there is such a thing as bad music, and that words can be used merely as a sort of *vocalise* for melody, is no argument that music cannot mirror the rhythms of poetry exactly; there is another kind of music that follows its words faithfully and loyally, and even humbly. He has no hesitation in referring † to Byrd and Wilbye, and musicians of that school, as “mere music masters” who, one could hardly suppose, wrote the words for their songs. No more, indeed, than we can suppose that a mere poacher and guttersnipe like Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. (May Heaven forgive us!) He perpetrates these :

The fact, as pointed out elsewhere, that accent has no place in music, at once shows that music and prosody cannot be on all fours.‡

The rather numerous prosodic students who cannot rid themselves of the notion that music is the thing to help them, are naturally enough impelled by the *anacrustic* fashion of scansion which music suggests to “see trochees” as freely as another class of persons sees snakes.§

Alas, Saintsbury is not the only prosodian who does not know that to *bar* a piece of music is not to scan it—that, as a matter of fact, a rising—iambic if you like—metre is much more common in musical rhythms than a trochaic. He thinks music has a bad influence on poets, and instances || Shelley as a musical ignoramus, forgetting that Milton was

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. I, p. 264.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 138.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 495.

§ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 528.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 102. He says Shelley was “insensible to technical music”. We know that he was not insensible to music. Knowledge of the technique of music is indifferent either way to the writing of a poet. It is irrelevant unless he is writing words meant to be sung.

not. He quotes Moore \* as a poet who actually *wrote* music. He ought to have quoted Campion, or some contemporary "music master". For him the effect of music on prosody is to invalidate its every conclusion. Some musical prosodians have made mistakes. Who hasn't? This is no argument. Even if every conclusion of every musical prosodian that ever was, were wrong, still this should not prejudice the reader against musical prosody beyond hope of conversion. To condemn a whole class of prosodians because some in that class have made mistakes is not just. One might as well say, "No woman ought to wear black; see how washed out they all look in it!" Why, even a red hat is defensible, though not against a bull. Saintsbury's attitude is difficult to understand. It is difficult to see why knowledge of the elements of music should disqualify one from the study of prosody. Why should it? Does a knowledge of botany disqualify the zoologist, or a knowledge of mathematics the astronomer? Perhaps music will not help the reader to read poetry; certainly no amount of music will make up for deficiency in poetic appreciation; but why should it disqualify? Most of the quarrels in prosody result not so much from reading or hearing differently as from labelling sensations differently—the difficulty lies less in hearing aright than in analysing and knowing what one does hear. It is argued against nationalisation that Government concerns cannot pay because Government servants do not "get the sack" when they make mistakes. Private or company-run concerns pay because instant retribution follows if they don't. No amount of riding on a tricycle will give the power of nice balance we learn on two wheels. There is a parallel in the musician's and the prosodian's analytic valuations. Retribution falls at once on the musician who cannot evaluate his quantities correctly, or makes mistakes with his accents. His music is

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, pp. 83-7.

misread. Conversely, the musician knows how to read from “quantity” and “accent” signs; his discrimination is trained from both angles; he can read from the symbols into which he translates; he is accustomed to the objective analysis of musical impressions. If an inexperienced musician makes a mistake, the mere objectification of it on paper makes the error evident. Correct evaluations come with practice, because the errors are checked immediately. There is nothing to check the errors of the prosodian who has the confidence he ought to have in his own judgment. If he labels his sensations wrongly he belongs to a different batch of prosodians. Surely if there is a constant, consistent disagreement between the results of the musical and the unmusical prosodian, those of the prosodian who has had some training in analysing his musical impressions are more to be trusted than those of the man who, however exquisite his enjoyment, however sensitive his appreciation, however perfect his taste, cannot analyse the impression he gets. At the very least, the fact of a little abstract musical training cannot disqualify one from applying it practically and specifically in analysing analogous if not identical musical impressions. But the musical prosodian does not want to claim any superiority; he asks only toleration.

The attitude of the orthodox prosodic world is against us. Before starting on our study, it almost appears as if we had to take an oath of abstinence, of seclusion from the influence of music, save as a trivial pastime not to be indulged in or taken seriously. We must assume a public musically ignorant. It must not surprise us when a writer, rebelling against the tyrannous associations that cling to the meaning of such words as *dactyl* or *trochée*, proposes in his search for symbols without association to call them *dominant* and *tonic* feet, making an elaborate classification with *supertonic*s and *submediants* and so forth, not meaning that the dactyl is a dominant foot, though it does begin with *d*, nor the trochée a tonic foot, though it begins with *t*, but merely using these

as labels, equivalent to "A" foot and "B" foot. Nor must we complain of the confusion caused by misapplying borrowed musical terms like *triple time* and *duple time*, until *triple time* becomes duple and *duple* triple, and the writer has to tell us in which category he stands before we know whether *duple* means duple or triple, and *triple* triple or duple. Saintsbury gives his verdict, which is held by Omord and many other competent men. Omord's reason is rational ; he says \* the dactyl is a foot of three equal syllables, the iambic of two equal syllables. Discussing whether anapæsts and dactyls are in duple or triple time, Saintsbury says † that whatever they are musically, prosodically they are always "Triple = 'divided into three parts'." Now *triple time* does not mean "divided into three parts". It is a definite technical term indicating bars of three beats. The commonest triple-time bar in music is made up of a *long* and a *short* |  $\overline{p}$  | ; less common is the division into three |  $\overline{p}$   $\overline{p}$  |. If the dactyl consists of a *long* and two *shorts* |  $\overline{p}$   $\overline{p}$  |, then, despite its three syllables, it is in duple, not triple time. We are talking about time, not divisions. If we cut music out of prosody, then why bother about musical terms ? But if we do resort to musical terms we ought to use them properly. Saintsbury says ‡ it is an impertinence to use musical symbols to scan. How much more impertinent to misuse them ! And, after all, is talking of a dactylic measure being in duple time impertinent ? It is to tell the prosodian something that, by his surprise, he evidently did not know before. We might as well say it is impertinent of the naturalist to call a bat a mammal. Obviously to us students of the twilight, who, thank God, are neither naturalists nor tainted by contact with zoology, a bat is a species of bird—"it has wings", one of *our* birds moreover ; besides, what difference does it make to the twilight even if it were a mammal ? None, of

\* *Study of Metre*, pp. 84-6.

† *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 535, footnote.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 494-5.

course, but it makes a considerable difference to the bat, and is it not bats we are discussing ? Saintsbury, truly, (and this is the whole trouble) does not discuss bats. Being a prosodian, not a metaprosodian,\* or one who studies what lies behind prosody, he is interested in prosody only in so far as it contributes to the twilight or will give him a working basis for his history. His opposition is the practical man's ; we have heard it before, often, oh, very often ; he objects to the hunters and prospectors in the backwoods of prosody that they bring home no potatoes—neither potatoes nor tobacco, and he has been working in the fields all day and has a glorious harvest, stacks of it, golden and rich, to show for his labour. “ Let us all be harvesters,” he seems to say, “ if everyone were a pioneer of the bush we should all starve.”

“ Meta-prosody ” justifies itself as abstract science does. If it does nothing else, it gives us more to talk about. Our prosody is too general in its material and too limited in its explanations ; it does not tell us so much about the form of poetry as it might. When we come to look at the substructure of prosody we find ourselves in the substructure of the prosody of music. Music has, moreover, ready-made a set of symbols without extraneous associations, signifying precisely and severally those very things in the prosody of poetry we wish to distinguish. When the prosodian talks about a “ long ”, “ - ”, “ ' ”, we do not know whether he means a syllable that takes a comparatively long time to pronounce, or if he refers to the quality of the vowel, or if what he really means to indicate is an accent, or perhaps even a rise in pitch ; whereas when we write the musical symbol “ ♫ ” we know precisely what is meant. Musical symbols have another advantage, which answers an objection Saintsbury formulates while “ shoo-ing ” Mr. Thomson,

\* Saintsbury coins “ meta-prosody ” on the popular analogy of “ meta-physics ”, meaning what lies behind prosody.

the writer \* of *The Basis of English Rhythms*, out of these precincts :

That Mr. Thomson uses musical symbols and notation throughout would be almost enough. That he thinks he can arrive at metrical conclusions by a sort of Shamanistic process of "tapping" discourages me farther.†

Then, in a footnote he explains, after the manner of a famous Turk :

If the tap coincides with the ear we don't want it, if it doesn't it is wrong.

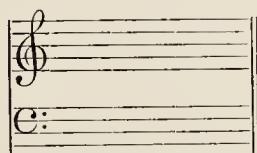
Tapping the rhythm objectifies the time and accent, takes the rhythm out of its context so that we may hear the metrical scheme apart from the other concomitants of poetic impression, gives the ear an unclouded impression. It is like making a "slide" of the thing you want to study. You cannot count the hairs on a beetle's limbs while it is alive ; there is too much distraction.‡ By using musical symbols we get a sign for each of the components of rhythm, and having a sign for each somehow makes our discrete perception of them more clear ; we are able to objectify and differentiate. Therefore I propose to use these ready-made symbols. A round dot with a tail signifies the symbol of time.  $\text{♩}$  is the norm and standard we start from. It is called a "crochet", and signifies a "long" with regard to time, half its value, the "quaver" ( $\text{♪}$ ), signifying a "short" with regard to time. Two pennons on the tail halve the short.  $\text{♩} = \frac{1}{2} \text{♩}$ , which is  $= \frac{1}{2} \text{♩}$ , and  $\text{♩}$  itself is  $= \frac{1}{2} \text{♩}$ .  $\text{♩} \text{♩}$  is the symbol for an iamb composed literally of a short and a long syllable. A dot lengthens the note it follows by half. Thus  $\text{♩} \cdot = (\text{♩} + \text{♩})$ . Accent is signified by the bar line | in front

\* Since this was written his other book has come out. Though it adds to the study I have not discussed it, as it goes away on a different tack from my work.

† *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 470.

‡ If anyone wants to know why we should count the hairs, see J. Arthur Thomson's *Science and the Control of Life*.

of the accented note ;  $\text{I} \mid \text{I}$  represents an iamb, counting the long both more accented and longer than the short,  $\text{I} \text{I} \text{I}$  a trochee of the same sort. If the syllables of the iamb and trochee differ in accent, though not in duration, we write them  $\text{I} \mid \text{I}$  or  $\text{I} \mid \text{I}$ , and  $\text{I} \text{I} \text{I}$  or  $\text{I} \text{I} \text{I}$ . We shall avoid as much as possible the use of "rests", which indicate the length of silences.  $\text{I}$  is the symbol for a silence =  $\text{I}$ , and  $\text{I}$  or  $\text{I}$  for one =  $\text{I}$ . To signify changes in pitch we have the musical staves :



It is difficult to explain succinctly the precise significance of these. Roughly, we indicate pitch by the position on the stave of the dot of the time symbol. The higher up the stave, the higher the pitch. Thus, if we wish to state that "Mary" is a trochee with the first syllable longer, more accented, and slightly higher in pitch than the second, we

should represent it something like this 

bigger drop in pitch 

"The stag at eve had drunk his fill" thus :



indicating a line of four iambs in triple time. *And, the feet do not coincide with the bars.* We have indicated them by

\* This is one of Saintsbury's objections—that all prosodians do not use them with the same meaning. It does not hold for the prosodian who uses his symbols correctly.

the    sign under. This seeming contradiction has caused incredible confusion, and we cannot emphasise it too strongly. Sidney Lanier,\* although a musical prosodian, uses his | symbol to mark not bar lines, *i.e.* accents, but foot divisions ; which both deceives the eye of the musical reader and deprives one of our most valuable symbols of its real significance. The whole point of taking the musical set of symbols in preference to the prosodic is their complete efficiency ; if we use them with altered significance, all excuse for using them has gone.

It must not be thought that the musical prosodian wishes to say something heretical about poetry. When he starts comparing poetry with music, it is immediately assumed that he says something new about poetry. He does nothing of the sort. But he comes on the unmusical reader with the knowledge of some strange art, and all the facts of poetic prosody seem alien and unfamiliar stated in terms of the new art. The reader takes the meaning : “ My prosody is not to be considered right, is it ? It is to be considered different in this respect, different in that ; in fact, it is to be considered music, not poetry.” This was not the effect intended. But if his readers have misunderstood him, the fault lies partly in the musical prosodian ; he has assumed a more sympathetic, and worse still, a more comprehending audience than exists for him. He meant to say : “ Look here, you poetic prosodians, do you realise that music is just the same as your poetry ? It has the same laws, the same materials, and is really similar in quite an astonishing degree ; the prosody of the one art can be translated into terms of the other ; this is how your prosody looks translated into music.” He could have shown how musical rhythms looked

\* *The Science of English Verse*, p. 115. He thinks the “ bar ”, the equal time division, or “ isochronous interval ”, constitutes the foot ; hence his use of the bar line to divide poetry into isochronous intervals, though from our point of view undesirable, has some justification. He

writes an iamb |  |.

written in terms of prosody, but that would have merely amused the musician, who has known it for thousands of years, save for the century or two behind us, when he forgot it. To get ourselves out of this false position we can start from the other side, assume prosodic facts and show how music resembles them. This is easily done because musicians explain their prosody on this analogy, and we have but to go to orthodox, even stick-in-the-mud musical text-books to find the illustration ready waiting. On the safe side of orthodoxy is *Musical Form* by Prout, who is orthodox to out-of-dateness. Nothing we quote from him could possibly be regarded as a musical heresy. We need not follow him into the details of his prosody ; he may still be bought in second-hand book shops for 2s. 6d. It will be enough if we use him to illustrate one or two resemblances between the arts that the musical prosodian has assumed with disastrous result. First, and most important, he tells us that music is composed of feet. He calls the smallest musical atom a *motive* :

Motives are the equivalents of musical *feet*.\*

He means, of course, that they *are* musical feet, the equivalent of feet in poetry.

With certain exceptions, to be presently noted, every unaccented note is to be regarded in its connection with the following, and not the preceding accented note. An accented note preceded by an unaccented note, as in the cadence above † gives us the simplest possible form of motive. ‡

That is to say, the simplest form of musical foot is an iamb. As examples of the commonest rhythms he gives us  $\text{p} \mid \text{p}$ ,  $\text{p} \mid \text{p}'$ ,  $\text{p} \mid \text{p}'$ , and  $\text{p} \text{p} \mid \text{p}$ ,  $\text{p} \text{p}' \mid \text{p}$ , i.e. iambs and anapæsts. He scans, or marks the feet of this hymn tune thus :



\* P. 31.



† P. 27.

It is in two identical sections, composed of a monosyllabic note, followed by three iambs. So far from having any idea of trochaic rhythm in his mind, he takes some pains to explain away the anomaly of an initial accented note. He says the initial note is elided, which seems the recognised explanation. This sounds like the sort of theory which takes its rules as the *a priori* things and deduces the attributes of its facts. An explanation of an initial accented note could neither be required, nor deduced, if a theory did not pre-exist. Therefore I do not think we need take the rule too seriously. It is not Prout's business to consider if music has other feet ; he is a grammarian, not a philosopher. Nor is it ours ; though if it were true that music has only iambic and anapæstic feet, then certainly Saintsbury—but of course it is not true. If we take an extract from Brahms' *Blacksmith (Der Schmied)* we can see that the feet are amphibrachs :



It is the metre of the forge. The hammer hits the anvil thrice for each stroke, with a little sound as the smith places his hammer, the stroke, then the settling down of the recoil. I do not think we can doubt that Brahms had this rhythm in his mind, the jump of the sixth which he starts with being so expressive that it, too, seems like a direct recollection. In Holst's *Hymn of Jesus* we find at least one passage with unmistakable anti-bacchus feet ( $\text{b} \mid \text{p} \text{p}$ ), forming bars of five-beat rhythm : \*



The equal bar in music disturbs some prosodians and excites the interest of others, but the equal bar has no more

\* *Vocal Score*, p. 11.

importance for music than for poetry. Its triple time is not important to Brahms' song. Waltzes and minuets and all sorts of rhythms have triple-time bars. What is important is the  $\text{P} \mid \text{P} \text{ P}$  rhythm. Obviously when we string a number of  $\text{P} \mid \text{P} \text{ P}$  feet together, we get bars of equal length, but this is a result, not a cause of the rhythm. Mr. Omord's argument \* that iambic time must be duple because one cannot imagine "Milton's majestic music" in *Paradise Lost* based on the "jig" of triple time, is beside the point. Even allowing that all jigs were in triple time, we can retort that we can no more imagine it based on the jazz of duple time, the truth being that both failures of the imagination are purely frivolous and irrelevant. The time of the bar is of no consequence; the foot determines the rhythm in music as in poetry. Consequently prosodians need not fear the "isochronous interval". They will not lose their reputation, and will not give so very much away, if they do admit that poetic metres can form equal bars in duple and triple times.

But Omord states the most damaging objection to collating the two prosodies :

It will also be evident how futile it is to expect correspondence between the methods of metre and music. Musical notes are almost pure symbols. In theory at least, and no doubt substantially in practice, they can be divided with mathematical accuracy—into fractions of  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{16}$ , etc.—and the ideal of music is absolute accordance with time. Verse has other materials and another ideal. Its words are concrete things not readily carved to such exact pattern. . . . The perfection of music lies in absolute accordance with time, that of verse in continual slight departures from time. This is why no musical representations of verse ever seem satisfactory.† They assume regularity where none exists. They show syllables as uniform which are really various and pretend that these keep perfect time when its imperfection forms part of the charm.‡

\* *Metrical Rhythm*, p. 22.

† If I may venture another explanation, it is because the length, which is spread over the whole word in speaking, is given almost solely to the vowel.

‡ *A Study of Metre*, p. 59.

This is the real, legitimate objection prosodians feel to the musical method, and we cannot but be grateful to Omond for so justly expressing it. There is such a thing as music approximating to this ideal. It plays popular airs in the street and occasionally has a cage of birds or a monkey for accompaniment ; it gets us on edge chiefly because the time is so ideal. The more usual ideal among musical people consists in the “ continual slight departures from time ” which Omond claims for poetry. These give meaning and expression ; strict time sounds very mechanical. The notation of music was never meant to be precise. It is ridiculous to suppose that the mind can judge the exact  $\frac{1}{16}$  of a space of time. The symbol is merely near enough ; and, indeed, it is just here, in music as in poetry, that the interpreter comes in. Children who learn melodies by ear learn the sound of the melody and are unconscious of the time values they render. These become of first importance only when music is communicated by paper. Even in plain-song the time values of the notes were not written out. Similarly with the bar line ; it remained undiscovered till songs were sung and written out in several “ parts ”, when it became necessary to draw a line down all the “ parts ” on important places, to show where they were with respect to one another. Our consciousness of time values, and of the regularity or the irregularity of the accent in music would possibly have remained latent, just as it tends to in poetry, if the rhythms of music were still communicated directly to the ear. It is not as if the composer starts with three ingredients, pitch, accent and time, which he mixes together ; he starts from a formed melody composed of notes as much entities in themselves, as whole and entire and inconglomerate seeming as syllables in poetry. Only the necessity of writing his music on paper makes him analyse his melody into its components of time and accent and pitch. The precise symbols of music are only scriptural devices. The written stuff is not so much another sort of arithmetic, as another sort of

spelling. And just as spelling does not give us the whole clue to the pronunciation, so is it with musical symbols. The crochets are not of the same relative value in every | ♫ ♫ | bar. In nine out of ten the first is longer than the second, sometimes a little longer, and sometimes much longer. We feel the difference between | ♫ ♫ | and | ♫ ♫ | vividly at the extreme, but at the common spot where these rhythms approximate the difference is not so very great that a little push will not overbalance one into the other. In music each context decides the precise value of its symbols. Our simile was a good one ; we can even make out the composer's intention from a wrongly-barred piece, just as we may know the word intended even if it is wrongly spelt.

## CHAPTER III.

### OUR MATERIAL.

THE foot is the seed of rhythm, not the first atom, but the first entity. On the whole we agree about this, though we say so in different ways. We may say it positively and absolutely, refusing to explain farther,\* define it in accents, in quantities, as an isochronous interval, a monopressure † (basing its structure on the way we exhale when we speak), or a centroid as Dr. Scripture does,‡ founding his opinion on a study of phonograph records. We may disagree as to how it arose, whether by instinct, by purposeful movement,§ or as a matter of design. Though we should say that origin-

\* Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, Appendix I.

† The idea of an anonymous writer adopted by Skeat, edition of Chaucer, Vol. IV, Introd.

‡ *Elements of Experimental Phonetics*, pp. 554-5. Actually, he says there is no such thing as a foot, since phonograph records show no break or division. He proposes to call the entity a "centroid". "In all forms of rhythm there is a tendency to arrange the centroids regularly." Nevertheless "in much English verse there is little or no regularity of distribution; just so many centroids are grouped in a line. In a stanza like

The cities are full of pride  
Challenging each to each  
This from her mountain side  
That from her burthened beach.

it would be a mistake to say that the meter is iambic, anapæstic, trochaic or dactylic." In effect he defines the foot afresh, and says the only sort of feet we have are centroids.

§ *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXIV, Swindle, "The Inheritance of Rhythm."

ally it was more a matter of purposeful movement than of design—since poetry started as instinctive or purposeful expression before it became conscious art—we must remember not to exclude poetry where the rhythms are more a matter of design. We disagree in almost every conceivable way about the composition of the foot, delimiting and refining, but here let us take as our motto—Prosody, beware of exclusion. There is not one thing, metrical form. Each type of poetic emotion has its own form. Say poetry is constructed on such and such principles and you are almost bound to be right for some poetry ; but become narrow and negative, and say poetry is not made so, and you are almost equally sure to be wrong for some poetry. Consequently we shall not narrow the meaning of *foot*, but follow Saintsbury's lead in shirking a farther definition. We may take it from him that feet are made up of "longs" \* and "shorts", \* syllables more emphatic and less emphatic. The "longs" \* and "shorts" \* are things that the ear hears, that the mind feels :

time, weight, loudness, sharpness and some other things take each other's places rather uncannily †

in determining the emphasis of a syllable. We have no more catholic definition, none more precise and yet absolutely true. The foot is the unit of rhythmic movement, the rhythmic "idiom". One fallacy we must beware of, however, the idea that this being so, it is immaterial whether the "longs" and "shorts" depend on time, accent or something else. A "long" made by time gives a different effect from one made by accent, because the ear can detect the difference. The foot is not the first thing the ear hears ; we hear the constituents of the foot as well ; there are many sorts of iamb. Therefore though we assume a positive answer

\* Elsewhere, when I use either of these words I refer to duration, not to emphasis, as here.

† Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 520, footnote.

to all the theories which say time, accent, and pitch determine the nature of the foot, we have to discuss relevant adjuncts to each. We shall discuss time and accent.\*

When we talk of time in poetry, do we mean time or something else? If we scan "beauty" as a long and a short with respect to quantity, are we justified in saying that the first syllable takes longer to pronounce than the second? It is incredible to me that anyone could doubt it. We obviously take a certain time to pronounce them; if we take a certain time, we should be able to ascertain what time. The ear determines that "beau" is longer than "ty". Even those who think that the quantity of a vowel has nothing to do with time and depends solely on its quality, need not object. We are discussing the length rather of the syllables than of the vowels; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that only vowels can be short or long, or that the vowel is always the greater part of a syllable. Dr. Scripture † measured a phonograph record of "Somebody said that it couldn't be done", and found that "So" and "y" of "somebody", "sai" of "said", and "couldn" of "couldn't" were long, but the longest sound of all was the "ne" of "done". The real problem is where to divide the word, where one syllable ends and the next begins. Phonograph records show no division for the syllables. This means that the syllabic division is subjective and can be determined only subjectively and not by scientific experiment. In "beauty" there can be little doubt of the time values, wherever we divide the syllables the first is the longer, but in "hilly" considerable. When we find Guest ‡ appealing to our ears to decide the first syllable as short as the second, and Saintsbury § asking us, on the evidence of our senses, to agree with

\* I discuss pitch in *Sound and Meaning in English Poetry*.

† *British Journal of Psychology*, January, 1921, "The Nature of Verse."

‡ *History of English Rhythms*, p. 107.

§ *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 281. He says: "The evidence of our senses agrees with them (though not exactly *for their reasons*)."  
My italics.

Spenser and Sidney in making it longer, we conclude that the ear alone cannot determine quantity. The first vowel of "hilly" is obviously shorter than the second; the length Sidney and Spenser heard was on the "ll"s; it all depends on how we pronounce it, "hi-lly" or "hill-y". The derivation, "hill-y", does not necessarily give the answer. Then, to disturb us farther, quantities are not fixed except, perhaps, in the abstract; \* we alter quantities to express different shades of meaning; the sounds of our language are alive and mercurial, subject to sudden meaningful changes. The first syllable of "awful" changes as its associations and significance vary from unemphatic slang to sublime terror. The quantities of "ugly"  $\text{p} \text{p}$ , used and spelt so in *Comus*, differ from those of "ugly"  $\text{p} \text{p}$ , casually and colloquially. Our pronunciation of "hilly" would depend on the steepness of the incline—"hilly bourne"  $\text{p} \text{p} \text{p}$ , both short because the meaning is slight, unemphatic and unemotional, almost artificial and without significance like the slang of "awful"; if we talk emotionally of "very difficult and hilly ground" our most expressive pronunciation is  $\text{p} \text{p}$ ; we lengthen the first vowel and glide into the "ll"s, the emphasis is on the beginning of the word and possibly the "ll"s are nearer the "i" than the "y". In "hilly bourne" the "ll"s are pretty equally poised in the middle, we certainly arrive at them quicker than we leave them; hence we get the impression of a short first syllable. Perhaps it is partly owing to a loss of real significance, to a hackneyed use, of "father" in church services that we sometimes find it shortened to  $\text{p} \text{p}$ , at least in Scotland.† But shortening of the more emphatic

\* Sonnenschein, *Rhythm*, has drawn up rules for the quantity of English words not in a context, and tested them by scientific measurement. He holds that they maintain these quantities in poetry, but has not, I gather, tested this by scientific measurement.

† Gardiner, *The Music of Nature*, p. 35, gives this for the declamation of "the Rev. Mr. Irving at the Scotch Church":

Al-mighty and most merciful Father; in whom we live, move and have our being

syllable does not by any means always take from its significance. "Father" pronounced  $\text{ʃ} \text{ʃ}$  or  $\text{ʃ} \text{ʃ}$  becomes a frightened call, as of a small child in the dark, supposing it had not a more concise appellative.

It follows from our altering of quantities to express different meanings, not that quantity is irrelevant, or immaterial, but that it is alive and significant. The context fixes quantity. Any doubt concerns the meaning ; given the meaning, the quantity is given. Theoretic disputes may sometimes arise when poets experiment in English imitations of classical metres, but seldom when they write English poetry with an English feeling for their words. If we grant this, then, we must admit both that "quality" is not a metrical consideration in English, and that it has no connection with quantity, unless indeed the quality of a vowel depends on its quantity—a question not for us but for phoneticians, who say that quality does not depend on quantity. It follows also that accent does not necessarily lengthen a syllable. Indeed a brisk, hard accent may shorten the syllable.\* "Father" =  $| \text{ʃ} \text{ʃ}$  has a relatively greater accent on its first syllable than "father" =  $| \text{f} \text{f}$  in ordinary unemotional pronunciation. We can sustain a vowel much longer with a light accent than with a heavy one. The more sleepy and unaccented our pronunciation the longer our vowels. Significance, not accent, determines our quantities. This does not clash with the fact gleaned from the psychological "lab.",† that in experiments with a ticking machine, or something similar, increased force gave a false impression of greater length, while a lengthened interval between the ticks gave a false impression of increased force. The "subjects" of the experiments were possibly neither musical nor prosodical. It proves that some people cannot dif-

\* In Milton's *Prosody*, p. 146, by Bridges and Stone, it is held that accent prevents both lengthening and shortening.

† *American Journal of Psychology*, T. S. Bolton (quoted in Omond's *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 212).

ferentiate quantity from accent, thus confirming the previous conclusion of quite a number of prosodians.\*

Omond says that :

*natural* quantity of course exists in English, as it must do apparently in all languages ; *metrical* quantity does not exist, and the supremacy of accent is the reason why it does not.†

This is suspect at once ; we find a theory instead of a fact for justification. It may be true that accent does more to determine metre than quantity, but this does not prevent quantity being metrical. It is not like choosing between black and white ; they are not incompatible. Perhaps in classical times metre depended on quantity or pitch emphasis alone. We can have a sense of rhythm without accent. I believe we have that sort in organ music owing to something to do with the mechanism of the instrument, as indeed one notices after one knows. But this does not mean that where the emphasis is an accentual one, quantity is of no account. It does not mean even, that if accent is the determining fact in metre, differences of quantity are not heard ; and I take it as an axiom that everything that we hear matters. If such a thing as “ natural quantity ”

\* As Omond, *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 4, says : “ Many will refuse to admit that the first syllable of words like ‘ very ’, ‘ banner ’, ‘ muscle ’, ‘ cockle ’, ‘ patter ’, ‘ petty ’ is as short as the second ”. Or again we find Saintsbury (*History of English Prosody*, Vol. II, p. 264) objecting that there are more than three accents in “ His ministers of vengeance and pursuit ” on the grounds (1) that it is music that makes a man say there are not, and (2) “ You stagger wildly from ‘ His min ’ to ‘ isters of ven ’ and thence to ‘ geance and pursuit,’ ” thus showing that he hears no difference between length and accent. We could make the line regular with regard to quantity and still have only three accents (when we should be wrong with three quantities) :

His ministers of vengeance and pursuit.



We are less likely to confuse the two when we have separate signs to represent them.

† *English Verse Structure*, p. 17.

obtains, it must have metrical consequence. Perhaps he means that we cannot reduce metrical quantity to rule, but on this principle we might deny "natural quantity". This view is held also by people with an idea like Coventry Patmore's that :

The time occupied in the actual articulation of a syllable is not necessarily its metrical value. *The time of a syllable in combination is that which elapses from its commencement to the commencement of the succeeding syllable*: so that the monosyllables "a", "as", "ask", "ask'st", though requiring five degrees of time for their articulation may have precisely the same temporal value in verse, just as in music played *staccato* on the pianoforte, the actual duration of sound in a crochet or quaver note may be the same, the metrical value depending altogether on the difference of the time which elapses before the commencement of the succeeding note.\*

This is a fanciful idea. English is not a *staccato* language ; scientists have proved that its words are not divided off from each other. Certainly the length of a syllable does not depend on the number of letters in it. "a" may take longer to pronounce than "ask'st", always assuming that the speaker of the latter has not fainted in the attempt ; but it can be longer metrically only if it is longer phonetically. Listen to English people speaking in the corridor, where the words are inaudible, and consider whether the melody of English is detached between the words.

Since length or quantity is alive, longs and shorts have no fixed relation. A short (♩) is not always =  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a long (♪), nor are the longs in a context equal to one another with metronomical accuracy. Music has the same irregularity. Scientific experiments bring us facts for comparison. Mr. Sears gives the following ratios for the notes of this melody played on the organ by S and B and M and W : †

\* *Essay on English Metrical Law*, p. 36.

† *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XIII, p. 57, "The Psychology of Rhythm." I have not copied the harmonies, only the melody. Perhaps I should say that in this time (C) the third beat of every bar as well as the first is accented.

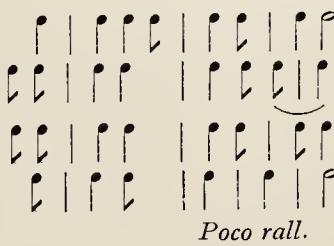


For S: 84, 90, 87, 90, 81, 90, 21, 28, 30, 90, 85, 93, 76, 97, 82, 94, 79, 81.  
 For B: 91, 96, 91, 95, 89, 84, 25, 24, 40, 80, 86, 93, 89, 96, 85, 92, 84, 201.  
 For M: 83, 78, 70, 73, 66, 77, 23, 25, 23, 72, 71, 76, 69, 77, 70, 75, 70, 75.  
 For W: 68, 73, 67, 72, 65, 74, 19, 20, 28, 71, 73, 73, 68, 73, 65, 73, 68, 76.

The more important notes are lengthened in a proportion of about at most 93:76 or at least 73:70. The length of the emphasised notes varies from sometimes an exact proportion to one of about 97:93. It is interesting that all the players interpreted the music much in the same way, only, while S, W and B thought of the first two notes as iambs with a rising emphasis, either M's mind had not begun to work on the first note, or else he considered it a sort of preliminary, or monosyllabic prelude, beginning to phrase from the first note of the bar. Although in this experiment emphasis invariably lengthened the note, it acts differently in other experiments, sometimes shortening the note. The following proportions for poetry come from Mr. Warner Brown's *Time in English Verse Rhythm*: \*

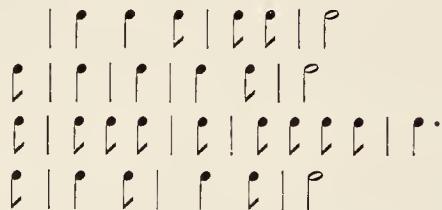
	Total length of line.
I stood on the bridge at midnight,	
25 27 27 16 28 17 25 76	241
As the clocks were striking the hour,	
17 17 34 33 32 23 129	285
And the moon rose o'er the city,	
18 12 37 34 36 15 18,59	229
Behind the dark church tower.	
11 39 15 37 44 184	330

We might put these into this musical notation :



	Total length of line.
Sunset and evening star,	
46 48 20 25 24 105	268
And one clear call for me !	
20 54 48 47 24 91	282
And may there be no moaning of the bar,	
20 31 25 19 28 28 19 17 20 64	271
When I put out to sea.	
24 32 15 37 15 180	303

In musical symbols this might be :



We cannot take these as the final authority ; they are the values rendered by one man, who may or may not have read well. Obviously "I", "stood" and "on" at the beginning of the first quotation ought not to be recited as three longs. We might cavil at some other things, but taking the results as we find them, we discover, just as in the musical measurements, that the crotchets (♩) may be exactly equal, or may differ in the proportion of about 34 : 33 or 44 : 37. The quavers (♪) vary too from an exact proportion to say 17 : 11.

In Dr. Scripture's *Elements of Experimental Phonetics* \* we find these results (in  $\frac{1}{1000}$ s of a second) from the measurement of a nursery rhyme record :

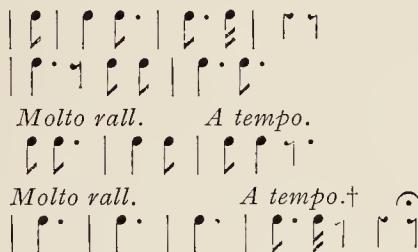
Who killed Cock Robin ?	♩ †
199 347 280 263,130	700
I, ♩ said the sparrow,	
452,210,186 116 472, 294	

\* Pp. 547-50.

† "♩" is used in this quotation to indicate any silence irrespective of its length.

With my bow	1	and arrow,	1
224	365	630, 11, 390	228, 331 420
I killed *	Cock Robin.		1
334	482	402 216, 156	955

This is more difficult to translate into musical symbols, but we might represent it thus :



Let us say that here the greatest deviation from strict time is in the ratio of 482 : 334.

If we reduce our ratios to a common denominator, we find that the greatest deviation from strict time for equal notes was, in the musical experiment, in the proportion of 805, 904 : 986, 172, in the Warner Brown experiments 829, 281 : 986, 172, and in the "Cock Robin" record 683, 364 : 986, 172. That is, the discrepancy for poetry in one experiment is slightly larger, in the other slightly smaller than for music. Sears tells that

a renowned musician in playing (on the piano) five successive notes was found to retard the interval between any two of them 0.01 of a second.‡

Both Scripture's and Warner Brown's results are in thousandths of a second, so we get from them a difference of 0.148

\* After "and" and "killed" the phonograph record shows an *e* vowel due as Scripture explains to an attempt at extra distinctness. The *e* of "ande" = 102, and of "killed" 81. I have not added these to the calculations because we do not make such attempts at extra distinctness in our silent reading of poetry, and, in my opinion, they upset the balance and spoil the music when we do in recited poetry.

† *Molto rall.* = gradually render at a much slower rate. *A tempo* = back to the first speed.  $\textcircled{2}$  = a longer time than the symbols represent.

‡ *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XIII, p. 30, "The Psychology of Rhythm."

of a second for the nursery rhyme and 0.07 for the time of the poetry ; that is, comparing their greatest fluctuation with the average fluctuation of the pianist's time. These results are only approximate. One could work out grizzly arithmetical calculations and get an exact relation, but it does not seem worth while on such slight material—the results of one or two experiments on musical time values and one or two on poetical. It is even more difficult to compare the relation  $\text{b} : \text{p}$  for music and poetry.\* As far as I know, only the very mechanical playing of a musical-box has been tested, with these results :  $\text{b} = 30.73$  where  $\text{p} = 58.42$ , which makes the half note 3.04 too long. In another record,† the results were different ;  $\text{b} : \text{p} = 14.25$  where  $\text{p} = 34.25$ , making the half note about 2.8 too short. We find, taking examples from Warner Brown's and Scripture's measurements, that sometimes  $\text{b} : \text{p} = 1 : 2$ , or rather  $17 : 34$ , though at other times the discrepancy is large, almost discouragingly large. "Behind" ( $\text{b} : \text{p}$ ) =  $11 : 39$ , that is  $\text{b} = \frac{1}{3}$  and not  $\frac{1}{2}$  of  $\text{p}$ —a relationship music expresses by "dotting" the "p", thus  $\text{b} | \text{p}$ . We could express this in poetic scansions in the same way. I do occasionally resort to "dotting" notes, but not often, because going very quickly, especially in irregular time, it requires a very quick ear to notice the difference between "Behind" =  $\text{b} | \text{p}$  and "the bridge" =  $\text{b} | \text{p}$ . The experiments on music, the musical-box one certainly, were undertaken to discover if regular time is kept ; the experiments detect irregularities which the ear does not hear. Consequently these irregularities are not nearly the largest in music, for in *tempo rubato* we deli-

\* Sonnenschein, *Rhythm*, tested the relationship of "long" and "short" syllables in English words (not in any context), and concludes that on the average a "long" : a "short" :: 2.65 : 1.0. That is, taking the length of the average "short" syllable and comparing it with that of the average "long".

† *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XIII, p. 35.

‡ This was  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the beat ( $\text{p}$ ) in the record, which may account for the difference.

berately juggle with the time values. Poetry is often in *tempo rubato*, so presumably Warner Brown's, and almost certainly Scripture's, renderings had this freedom. Still, quite possibly time is more flexible in poetry than in music. We have not sufficient data for a real comparison; what facts we have are interesting rather in showing that an answer could be got than in giving one.

One big difficulty remains, a difficulty that stumps all prosody, or is at any rate, particularly obstinate in experimental prosody—the problem of different readings. We cannot take the report of an experiment on any reading as final; we must know how the poem was read, if with an ear for its music or merely for the significance of the meaning, if with sing-song effect or with intelligence. We cannot always take the word of the experimenter, for we have no guarantee that he is either literary or musical, or even that he is always intelligent with the intelligence that matters in art; every mason is not an architect. What might be valuable, and has not yet been attempted, is a comparison of measurements from the phonograph record, with the values the reader believed himself to give, and it would be the more valuable if the reader were a competent prosodist. If the results of science confirmed that prosodian, we could trust his analytic powers. But even then remains the question, is his reading ours? And that raises the question, not yet answered and possibly unanswerable, of the ideal reading—a problem we shall not attempt. The real poetry is that which the ear hears when the lips are dumb.\* We could never expect to have the music of our own silent reading reproduced audibly; it is more beautiful than any sound that ever was mortal; and this music heard in the silent ear is the material of the prosodian, material that can never be analysed by mechanical experiment or psychological investigation. What takes the wind out of a scientific study

\* What Coventry Patmore calls "the unexpressed imagination of its music". (*Essay on English Metrical Law*, p. 32.)

possibly helps the literary. There is conceivably more uniformity in the silent reading than in the spoken. We remember how poetry tends to carry its own *tempo* in a silent reading. It is not more wonderful that poetry should tend to read itself. Although the eccentricities and vocal manner of the audible reader give a likeness to all he delivers, we cannot suppose he feels this likeness when the sounds have not to come through his physical frame. Does the stutterer hear a stutter in every line? It seems in some subtle way that Pope reads himself to us in a different tone, with a different feeling for time and accentuation, and almost in a different pronunciation from Shakespeare. When the poet himself speaks to us from his page, we may come pretty near the sound he originated. This is obviously not true in detail of our spoken renderings of poetry, where man becomes an intermediary instrument whose technique most men have never learnt; but if it is not true of the silent poetry we hear, prosody has no value save as an individual record. We must take this as given, otherwise prosody cannot exist. Given more or less—for prosody can never hope to be correct to a fraction—it can only come somewhere near. None of our facts are uniform enough for exact results; poetry is too alive to be reduced to rule. By blinking the fact we may arrive somewhere the sooner, but it does not follow we shall be nearer the truth. And, after all, why should we require exact results? Prosody is as much a part of æsthetics as a science.

We have come to the conclusion that time, like many other things in poetry, is not kept strictly. This does not mean that time is not kept at all. The larger the unit the more regular the time. Sears \* tells us, or we can infer from him, and from the results of Warner Brown's experiments, that the length of the line varies less than that of the foot. But even allowing for all fluctuations there yet remains, to put it on the musical side, the reality of the

\* In article already quoted.

“bar”. Some time back we said that the equal bar in music was fictitious and arrived by accident when we strung together a number of identical feet. This needs qualification. There is such a thing as a “bar feeling”; the difference between the feeling of a waltz and a march does seem as much one of time as of rhythmic figure; all waltzes have the same sort of “bar feeling”. Moreover, once a definite time has been set up, it tends to remain even though the feet forming it may change, which shows that the equal-bar feeling is not purely adventitious. M. Dalcroze \* thinks the equal bar merely a convention, composers tending to force what would otherwise be free rhythms into patterns fitting the regular bar, until they come to think only in equal bars. It is at least a tenable theory. But there may be more in the equal bar than convention. Perhaps rhythms which make the same sort of bar are more closely related than those forming a different time. And more, part of the feeling lies in the regularity of the pulse. After the “time” has been going for a little we do measure the rhythm by the bar, hence our feeling of “syncopation” when the rhythm is upset. The analogy holds for poetry. Once a rhythm of identical feet has been set going, the accents come at isochronous intervals. In very simple rhythms like :

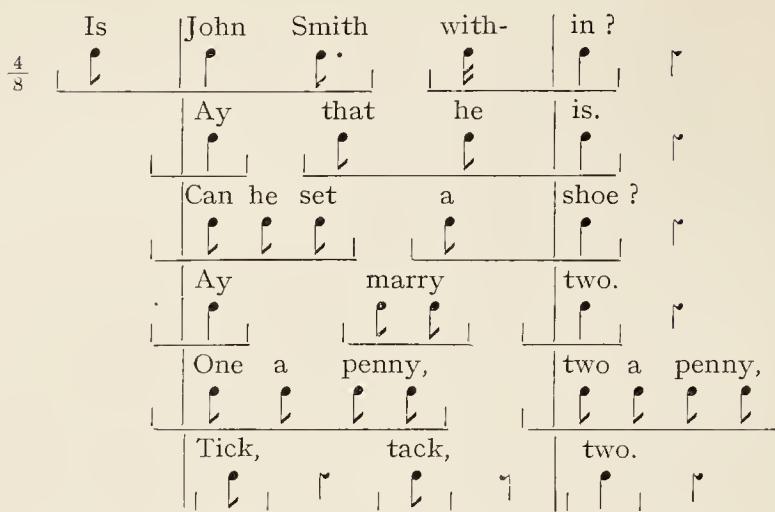
The Stag at eve had drunk his fill,  
 Where danced the moon on Monan’s rill,  
 And deep his midnight lair had made  
 In lone Glenartney’s hazel shade,

we have a “bar feeling” as distinctly as in music. Several writers have noticed how children tend to get nursery rhymes into equal-bar rhythm. Lanier † gives us :

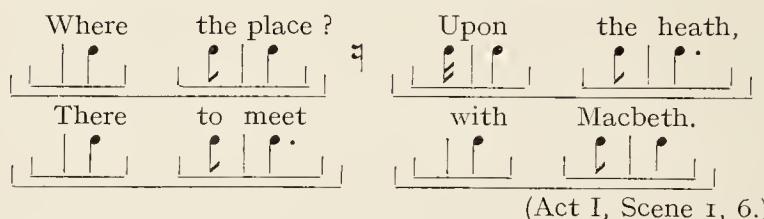
\* *Rhythm, Music, and Education*, p. 240.

† *The Science of English Verse*, pp. 187-8. The marking into feet (—) is mine.

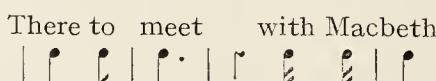
˘ is a silence =   
 ˘ „ „ =   
 ˘ „ „ =  (used in the scansion following).



Here we have an equal-barred rhythm composed of different feet. This is not confined to nursery rhythms :

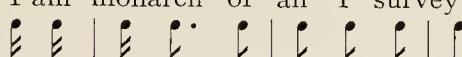
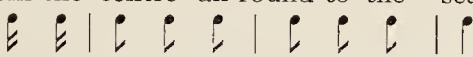
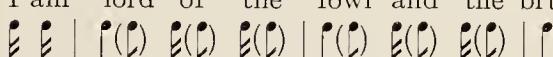


The accent on "with" is optional, depending on how simple we consider the situation. If the witches are creatures of popular superstition we should give them this "false accent", the rhythm being stronger than the meaning. If, on the other hand, we can conceive of them in a more mystic, mysterious, twentieth-century light, with solemnity and intellectual reverence, we should say that "with" must not be accented. Or we might still keep our nursery music and scan the line :



which is quite probably what Shakespeare's witches might have done, the pause and flutter being panicky. If modern stage witches said it like this, we should laugh of course,

but who has not refrained from laughing at our stage weird sisters? Possibly we may read Cowper's *Verses supposed to be written by Alex. Selkirk* in equal-time bars:

I am monarch of all I survey ;  
  
 My right there is none to dispute ;  
  
 From the centre all round to the sea  
  
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  


(Anapæsts in "triple time"!) This is to read it in sing-song, nursery-rhyme fashion. Not that all equal-barred rhythms are sing-song! We may read

To be or not to be that is the question,  


in equal bars without false quantities or accents; we scan according to the meaning and the result is equal-bar measures. In Cowper's lines the rhythm rather than the meaning determines our scansion; we listen to a rhythmic tune to which words with meaning are fitted; the song grasps our attention. In Shakespeare's line, the meaning strikes us first.

It is difficult to decide how far the tendency to read poetry in equal-bar rhythms should have its way, when natural or significant quantity should be modified to make the rhythm regular. In fact, the difficulty of optional readings again!—one that, like most difficulties, is larger in theory than in practice. Different readings depend on different literary interpretations and are, therefore, matter for literary criticism, not for prosody. Prosody's business is rather with the given reading. Without doing much violence to significant quantity we can read these lines from *The Cloud* in equal bars, with one possible exception; even this, however, can be made to fit the equal bar as a double-time bar in music may be found in a rhythm of triple time,

the bars remaining equal, |  $\uparrow$   $\uparrow$  | in a time of |  $\uparrow$   $\uparrow$  |—a device that seems to appeal to the prosodian. It should more logically be written |  $\uparrow$   $\cdot$   $\uparrow$  |.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,



And their great pines groan aghast ;



And all the night 'tis my pillow white,



While I sleep in the arms of the blast.



Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,



Lightning my pilot sits ;



In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,



It struggles and howls at fits ;



Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,



This pilot is guiding me,



Lured by the love of the genii that move



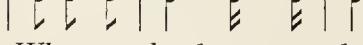
In the depths of the purple sea ;



Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,



Over the lakes and the plains,



Wherever he dreams, under mountain or stream,



The Spirit he loves remains.



“Lured by the love of the genii that move” may be better scanned like this; that is to say, not as the rest of the passage in triple time, but in duple. The unsympathetic reader, if we could imagine one so uncharitable, might say the “rests” are arbitrarily arranged to fit the scheme, and so far he would be quite right. We say only, that the poem can be read with these quantities, in that time, and that this may probably be *the* right reading, though we shall not be dogmatic and say it is the only right one. We have not given the words their most natural quantities. “Mountain” and “ocean” are not significant scanned  $\text{P} \text{P}$ , but then in the poem they are not significant. It would not matter very much to the meaning if Shelley had written “forests” for “mountains”; these words do not call for meaningful pronunciation, as the pronounced rhythm does call for their modification. “While I sleep” in another context might be scanned  $\text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P}$ ; here the poetic intention would be little altered if we had “while asleep”, or “as I sleep”. This is not significant scansion giving way to rhythmic, so much as the significance of the words lying in their fitness for the rhythm; their significance is rather musical than meaningful. We have not taken from the expressiveness of the poem by our “false quantities”, and we have added to its lyric quality. The difficulty resolves itself. When the poet uses words as threads to colour a rhythmic pattern, we are right in forcing them into that design; when he uses them for their innate expressiveness, it is sacrilege to make them dance to our tune.

In poetry, when we progress with a feeling of isochronous pulses rather than of feet, we experience a rising and falling sensation, as if we were up and down on a swing, to and fro in a cradle, a sense of motion this way and that, not a sense of accent and absence of accent. It is not the rising and falling of the hammer of sound which we hear, but the oscillation of the pendulum of time. Yet, that some poetry

reads itself in equal bars does not mean that we ought to define the foot as an isochronous interval. Saintsbury \* does some juggling with words in which he both scornfully accepts and indignantly rejects this definition. In effect he denies it, and there we agree with him. He accepts it as meaning that feet are equal to one another subjectively in that they balance one another, are equivalent or congruous. This balancing quality of feet is a factor rather in phrase than in foot construction, and not at all what the isochronous theory refers to. Theorists who make a rule of this, take the tendency to equal bars for a universal principle ; it is usually the musical prosodian who does so ; this theory of people who are vividly aware of the similar basis of musical and poetic rhythms, translates the apparent necessity of the equal bar in music into a necessity for poetry. It is an unnecessary cowardice. Possibly if prosodians like Coventry Patmore had known that the equal bar became a rule for music only in the eighteenth century, they would not have evolved this theory. Folk-song, plain-song and Elizabethan song have free rhythms, the bars not necessarily equal, yet these give us a pronounced sense of rhythm. Free rhythm, however, does not give us the equal-bar sensation, save where the bars are equal, for it does admit of equal-bar passages. We have a sense of stability and balance, but the subjective effect of free rhythm differs from that of regular rhythm as their "times" differ. Equal-bar rhythms wind us up, so to speak ; free rhythm relaxes the tension and sets us at rest. We can have subjective balance without either objective or subjective isochronism. Mr. Patterson † evolves a rather fascinating theory from this sense of balance or swing, which even unequal rhythm gives us. He takes as his basis the unitary pulse or bar, and says this can be accelerated or retarded, and yet retain its essential feeling. Talking of prose rhythms, he tells us how the ideal space

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 523.

† *The Rhythm of Prose*, c. p. 52.

covered between each pulse is constant, though we may vary the rate of the motion, just as, while we are singing a melody, if we draw a stick across the bars of a paling or radiator, striking one bar for each note, the space covered is identical between each note though the rate of the speed varies. Prose, he concludes, has equal bars though the *tempo* constantly varies ; in other words, the bar is an elastic of constant material. This at any rate recognises one truth, that in prose the pulses or units are of unequal length though they do give us a sense of oneness ; we have a sense of throb though the throbs do not come at regular intervals ; we count by the pulse, and a long pulse counts only one, and a short only one. It is as if we said answering ones make up rhythm but the ones need not be of constant length ; a long bar is equal not to two, but to one short bar. The weak point of Patterson's theory lies in its latitude. We see by his own simile about the radiator and the melody, that taken literally it would enable us to say that in a melody each note is the unit, and that where we come to a long note the speed of our progress is slow, and where we come to a short one our rate is quick. This is true and vital ; the relation of note or word values to one another, and not the absolute abstract time, determines the rhythm ; but the theory is not meant to be another way of telling us this. Moreover the essence of the difference, or of what difference there is between the rhythms of prose and poetry, lies in the very fact that whereas poetry tends to make us conscious of an isochronous interval, in prose the pendular motion stops. We sometimes have a sneaking sort of feeling that musical prose soothes us more than the chopped up tom-tom music of lyric verse. Everyone who has read poetry consistently and persistently, must know that in some moods rhythms like Jane Austen's give us more complete relief from the excitement of life than those of Shelley. When we wish to escape from the dull, regular isochronous sensations brace and excite us, but when we require not so much to be

strung up as to be rubbed out, prose rhythms, more subtle, more subdued, more quiet than verse rhythms, precisely because they give no equal-bar sensation, relax our attention. It is true that in prose which approximates to poetry we feel the noisy balance of the rhythm, and so is there verse that treads on tip-toe quietly. But advocates of the isochronous bar assume that unless we feel a regular beat the thing is not rhythmic. Why we should wish to feel this relentless equal bar is difficult to see. Prose where this was the rule would soon be felt as boring unless the feeling warranted the simpler rhythms of poetry. And, indeed, to write, apart from the reading of such prose, is a strain on one's nerves and a limitation on one's powers of expression. Good prose rhythm delights us rather by easing and putting to sleep our unappeasable time sense than by emphasising it even by denying it.

When we come to talk of accent we have to make a similar distinction, the distinction between subjective prominence or *emphasis* and objective *accent*, which means merely increased loudness, not ictus. Ictus accentuation is not metrical so much as expressional, or perhaps there is no such thing as ictus in poetry. For extreme emphasis we may say, "This—is—all—rubbish", hitting each word and the sorrowful writer an individual blow, but ordinarily when we accent a word we do not hit it with added force, we increase the swell in the noise we are making, unless, of course, we open with an accent. Speech is elastic. The volume of sound increases or dies away with rounded edge. The sound gradually swells up for the accented and melts down again to the unaccented syllable. There is no division between the accented and the unaccented syllable, between one word of a phrase and another, nor any such thing as *staccato* poetry.\* Even

\* Phonograph records show no break in the sound between words; the sound continues from the beginning to the end of the phrase. Nor is there any ictus accentuation, only an elastic swelling up or a gradual dying down of the volume of sound. (*The British Journal of Psychology*, January, 1921, "The Nature of Verse.")

in "This—is—all—rubbish" we should not naturally break the tone between each word, though by an effort we can. The words are distinct and separate to the eye and the mind only, not to the ear.

Accent, we say, gives emphasis, but perhaps we ought rather to say that emphasis gives accent. Emphasis also lengthens syllables, makes variations in pitch and pronounces more clearly. Consequently accent usually occurs with a heightening of pitch, with increased length, and with more distinct articulation; but it need not necessarily do so. Other considerations than those of syllabic emphasis regulate changes of pitch; the pitch at the end of a sentence commonly falls even when the last syllable is accented; we may emphasise a word by lowering the pitch; while if an accented syllable is in a hurry its shortness will add to the emphasis. To show how these different forms of emphasis come together or diverge from each other, we may quote results given for Scripture's *Cock Robin* record \* (\* = duration in thousandths of a second, † = pitch (period in thousandths of a second) of what he calls the *cord tone*—the vocal one. We must remember here that the lower the figure the higher is the pitch; 3·3 means that there is  $\frac{33}{1000}$  of a second between each vibration, 1·8,  $\frac{18}{1000}$  of a second. As pitch is determined by the rate of vibration, increased rate meaning higher pitch, the lower the figure, the higher the pitch. ‡ = intensity or loudness (amplitude in mm.)) :—

Who	killed	Cock	Rob-	in ?	¶
*199	347	280	263	130	770
†3·3	1·8	4·2	1·8, 5·3	8·4	
‡·4	·6 fading to ·1	·5	·3 ·5	·3 fading to ·2	
I,	¶ said	the	spar-	row,	
*452	210	186	116	472	294
†1·8 to 4	5·3	5·3	1·9 to 5·3	2·8 to 5·2	
‡·7	·5	·2	·5	·2 to ·6	

\* *Elements of Experimental Phonetics*, pp. 547-50. In this quotation ¶ = a silence of the given duration.

With	my	bow	7	and	ar-	row
*224	365	630	11	390	228	331
†5·3 to 2·1	5·3 to 3·6	7		7·7 to 5·3	5·2	7
‡·2 to ·4	·1 to ·5	·4		·2 to ·4	·3	·6
I	killed	Cock		Rob-	in.	7
*334	482	402		216	156	955
†12 to 4	5·6 to 4·9	7 to 5·3		3·9 to 4·2	5·6 to 8·8	
‡·6	·2	·3		·6 to ·1	·4 to ·1	

These figures are only approximate; pitch and intensity vary gradually, not in jumps, and even the time figures are only roughly right, it being difficult to know where exactly to divide the syllables. We notice that length, pitch and accent usually reach their maximum together, save that pitch falls before a rest or break, even "bow" having a very low inflection. In the record of "Somebody said that it couldn't be done" from *The Nature of Verse*, "said", "could" and "ne" of "done" were stressed. "So" of "Somebody" "y said", "couldn", and especially "ne" of "done" were long; "ome" of "somebody", "ai", and especially "d" of "said", and "couldn't" were highly pitched. The pitch fell very markedly on "done", tailing off on "ne".

Half the squabbles in prosody arise because these three elements of emphasis sometimes coincide and sometimes do not. Metrists think it necessary to decide the determining one. But no one is *the* rhythm-maker and the others merely accessories. In English poetry pitch certainly does not decide the metrical design. It falls to the cadence in a heroic couplet, the line remains iambic. Nor does length always determine the nature of the foot. Many trochees, like "city", have the first syllable at least as short as the second; in Warner Brown's experiment the "y" of "city" is longer than "cit". Accent, though perhaps the more frequent cue to metre, is not an infallible guide. We could say that "The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung" was a regular iambic line although there is no accent on "as". The constituents of rhythmic emphasis interplay to form an

ever-varying design. Ellis \* enumerates forty-five degrees of emphasis, including accent, pitch, length, silence, weight and so on, but he has surely underestimated. Poetry is not a dead, fixed thing that the degrees of its emphasis can be numbered. Why should we not just name the primary colours and leave the shades of the rainbow uncounted? Prosody can be exact only when its material is a corpse. The more vital prosodists believe in vivisection.

Nevertheless accent is not lawless and incalculable. Its unnumbered hairs all grow on the same head. Stress really belongs to grammar, which is one branch of psychology. Accent is an organic part of our language, not so much a superadded stress as a part of the essential meaning. "Meaning" accented as an iamb would signify something new. Such an alteration in the accents of words would imply a total change in our mentality. Accent is as fixed and characteristic a part of language as one's face is fixed and characteristic, but not more fixed; the play of expression may alter it, though precisely how much is a matter of opinion. How far can emotional stress contravene logical stress? Possibly Mark Liddell said the best thing about it, where † he pointed out that no word that had not already sense stress could have emotional stress, "for no notion that was not logically significant to the sense of the thought could, under normal conditions, be emotionally significant for the experience of the thinker." And since stress, whether of sense or of emotion, results from subjective emphasis, there should be no severing of the metrical from the logical and emotional stress. Mr. Miller says ‡ that in "When at our wake you for the chaplet ran," the metrical accent is as marked, but

\* Mayor, *English Metre*, p. 66, gives lengthy extracts from a paper read by A. J. Ellis to the Philological Society in 1876.

† *Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, p. 235.

‡ *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse*, p. 9.

' = stronger accent.

'' = secondary accent.

“you” has a pitch stress that is not metrical. A pitch inflection is not strictly speaking a stress, but let us take “you” as accented. If we start by assuming an iambic line with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables, then decidedly here is an exception; the emotional stress has countered the metrical. To make the distinction implies that the metrical stress is not emotional. If metrical stress is neither logical nor emotional, then it must be purely mechanical. Some time ago we admitted, or rather insisted, that unless there is good reason to the contrary, a mechanical rhythm continues. But we did not mean that when a conflicting emotional significance comes in, the mechanical rhythm continues with the non-mechanical superadded in syncopation. This is an entirely different matter. We showed how a more significant, or intellectual intention breaks up regular rhythm; “emotional stress” does not *differ from* metrical stress, but *alters* it. In other words, in “When at our wake you for the chaplet ran,” the accent of “you” is an essential part of the rhythm. Meaningful and metrical stress cannot be distinguished, because it is meaning that makes metre. To interpret metrical stress regardless of the meaningful accent is purely artificial. The etymological, the rhythmical, the logical and the emotionally significant accent must coincide. The etymological accent obviously should be preserved;\* in serious poetry we cannot accent “meaning” = ♫ | ♫; in a sensible rendering we must accent logically, and in good reading, with a sense of emotional values. And these accentuations do, in fact, form the rhythmical or metrical accent. Any prosody that aims to talk of real things as naturally as possible must assume this. We ought not to start with an *a priori* idea of feet or metrical design, and count *metrical accent* the thing that keeps

\* Allowing exceptions as in the passage quoted by Abbott in his *Shakespearean Grammar*, § 475, revised ed.: “Farewell gentle cousin, coz farewéll.” (*King John*, III, 2, 17.) There is a shade of difference in the meaning of these “farewells”.

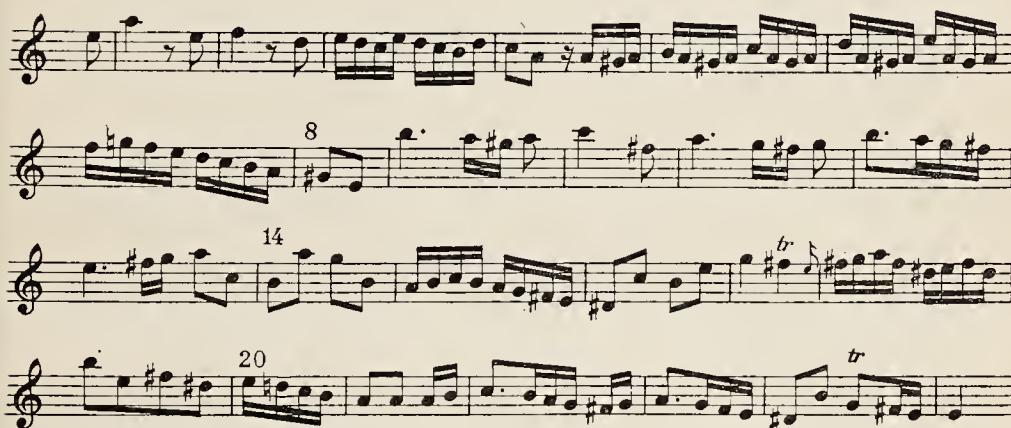
this vivid. The accent ought to be decided not by the feet, but by the words. Feet are not given *a priori* but discovered empirically ; their accent depends on the play of emotional accentuation on the accent of sense, which uses the accents of etymological pronunciation. Granting this does not mean repudiating feet, only recognising what forms them, nor does it mean repudiating metrical design, which is the pattern the rhythm makes when separated from its content —but it must hold its content. If a bony elbow is sticking through the pattern, this, it seems to me, alters the design. A coat in rags and tatters still remains a coat, but its design is considerably altered by its share of the meaning of life.

I am sorry to say that in the analogy, music is against us, or at least the theory of musicians ; but not more than the writing of our own prosodians, and not more unassailably. Instead of the foot as an *a priori* hypothesis, they take the bar, with more show of reality, since the bar does normally imply an accent. Even if the metrical were independent of the emotional accent in music, I do not know that it would necessarily weaken our position ; but we may as well look at the matter, as the idea that music had this contrast might make it seem probable that poetry had it too ; at any rate it has started prosodians after that hare. The foundation of music is a melody in the head of the composer. Even serious people have momentary lapses in which they think the composer chooses a key and writes down its signature ; then a time for his bar and writes that down ; then proceeds to invent a melody to fit the arbitrarily chosen key and bar. Such an idea is fantastic. When writers on music postulate an *a priori* bar, they do not mean this. In order to write his melody out for others to read, the composer proceeds to discover the key and time of his melody. The barring of the melody is not part of its inspiration, but a purely secondary and external piece of analysis. Thus it may happen that the time is misrepresented, the melody wrongly barred, so that the accents do

not come at the beginning of every bar. This is not conflicting metrical and emotional stress, and is irrelevant to the discussion. Still, to save finicking changes, the composer may carry on his regular bar even where the accents come irregularly, trusting the player to render them correctly. These irregular non-bar accents are "emotional accents", so called presumably because only the emotion of the music makes them evident. When the composer thinks his interpreters unintelligent, or at least, when afraid of their missing this emotional accent, he puts a sign of emphasis (>) over it, and this is called syncopation. We shall come to the more real distinction between emotional and syncopated accents in a moment. The thing before us can be examined thus: if we start objectively from heard, not written, music, how many different kinds of accents do we hear? Just as in poetry, we hear only one sort of accent. When it is the so-called metrical one we hear it regularly, when it is not metrical, but "emotional", we hear it irregularly. Where the emotional accent has upset the metrical, we get an impression not of a metrical *and* an emotional accent, but of a modified metrical accent. For the metrical accent is not arbitrary, but part of the emotion. If the emotion alters the emphasis surely it alters the metre too. Most writers on music write to inform people how to interpret music, and find it easier to explain that the written bar is not always the real bar, in terms of a contradictory emphasis, than to go into an emotional disquisition. To talk of the changed accent as superadded puts the thing logically and therefore understandably, for we can grasp the logic of a new idea more quickly than we can comprehend it: our reason is more open than our sympathy. Let us illustrate. At the beginning of the solo violin part of Bach's concerto in A minor we have:



Barred according to the real accent it would be written thus:



The first difference is in the 8th bar, the last note of which every player would feel bound, whether consciously or unconsciously, to accent. The beginning of the 9th bar has obviously no accent as the note is "tied", *i.e.* merely held on. The irregular accentuation continues down to bar 14, and starts again in the middle of bar 20, coming back to the written bar just before the end of our quotation.\* If the metrical accent were real it ought to become an emotional

\* I do not mean to dogmatise about the playing of this. My barring may disagree in some of its details with the barring of someone else. If it is right in its general outline for most players, this is close enough for the argument.

accent in our second version, it ought to be felt when there is no sign to mark it. I should think that even those who talk of emotional and metrical as conflicting accents, would agree that the old metrical accent has not turned into an emotional one. Regular barring persists in musical script only because time is more easily read in equal bars. Music like this does not feel syncopated—the feeling of being denied something, of an accent we expect and do not get, and of an accent we did not expect but get ; nor does it give us the feeling of two accents, a regular and an irregular ; the impression is rather of free rhythm. At all events the amateur feels it like that, and after all, music is the impression made on the amateur at least as much as the impression intended by the composer or performer. Musicians are naturally more interested in the technique than in the philosophy of music, and the distinction between metrical and emotional emphasis has been made rather from that point of view than from ours.

Connected with the problem of emotional accentuation is that of syncopation. If music had not syncopation, no one would have suggested such a thing for poetry. *Syncopation* is a fascinating word. It is pleasant to talk about the syncopated melodies of *Paradise Lost*, or to say that prose is poetry syncopated, and these descriptions do convey a sense of something of our feeling about *Paradise Lost* and prose. But for serious purposes we can transplant this flower into our prosody only if we take the root as well as the bloom. It will already have occurred to the reader that the term can be used slackly even in music. If we can explain a musical situation as something else, then as far as we are concerned, for our analogy it is not syncopation. Emotional irregularities, like those in the passage quoted from Bach, make free rhythms rather than syncopations, as do even some of the sudden crashes in jazz music. I recollect one in a hideous and undignified piece arranged for the piano called *Meouw*, where the caterwauling burst in on the second

beat of the bar, an alien and free rhythm. Mr. McEwen \* defines syncopation as cutting short a rhythm before its normal progression is consummated, and substituting a new rhythm in the same time as the old one but with the position of the accents reversed. The definition cuts out the Bach example where the substituted rhythms are neither the same as the normal one, nor as each other. Syncopation suddenly reverses the rhythm ; our mental balance which has been swaying in a regular rhythm is temporarily upset. If a consistent syncopation—one in all the “parts”—lasts long enough to allow our balance to readjust itself, the return to the original rhythm gives us a syncopated effect for a moment. The syncopated feeling is subjective, a failure to readjust ourselves to the new rhythm. We do occasionally get this feeling from poetry, but usually describe it as an unrhythmic sensation, or as a failure to grasp the changed rhythm ; we cannot readjust our balance so suddenly. Familiarity, or the reading of another quicker in rhythmic “uptake” than ourselves, commonly does away with the syncopated or upset feeling. In music also, familiarity with a consistent syncopation does away with the syncopated feeling. We take the change of rhythm as part of the accepted rhythmic scheme and cease to feel it as a contradiction ; only the written fact of it keeps the syncopation vivid. To sing a syncopated passage we know, from memory and a feeling of its rhythm is easier than to re-read it from the written page. All which goes to show that an unaccompanied melody cannot be syncopated. To give a syncopated effect the melody must have some accompanying sound emphasising the rhythm it contradicts. Music has this sort of syncopation, and with no other term to express the sensation. It is a modern effect and was necessarily unknown to music in the purely “one part” stage. All the talk about the savage’s complex sense of syncopation can be put in other terms. When we read of the wonderful syncopations of

\* *The Thought in Music*, p. 37.

savage dances, where all perform together, each in a different rhythm, our thoughts trend naturally to a conclusion somewhat different. Nor has the performance of complex free rhythms any connection with a syncopation sense. Patterson gives us a most naïve explanation and justification of this syncopation sense in savages. He experimented with mere moderns, and discovered that although his "subjects" (for this is almost a psychological experiment) could tap bars of five-beat rhythm against bars of seven-beat rhythm tapped by some one else, they found considerable difficulty in learning to tap simultaneously a five-beat bar with one hand and an isochronous seven-beat bar with the other. Indeed, they could not do this easily till they learnt a rhythmic tune like "one, two-and, three, and four, five and, six, and seven," the beats of the five-rhythm bar coming on the "ands".

The way in which primitive man could have developed such facility is easy to imagine. Two men happen to be beating their drums at the same time in different quarters. One is tapping twos, the other one threes. A third man hears the rhythmic tune of their combination and proceeds to tap it later on his drum. It interests him, so he plays it in different ways. Knowing that the original sounds came from a combination of two drums, he taps with his stick to represent one drum and with his foot to represent the other. Once done, the task is easy, and of course, it might have been suggested in a dozen ways.\*

In effect we are told that ordinary mortals and savages cannot beat five- and seven-beat rhythms in syncopation until they have discovered the rhythmic pattern they make combined, *i.e.* when they have ceased to be separate and therefore syncopated. One irregular rhythmic scheme is learnt, not two different simultaneous ones. Mr. Terry, in an article in *Music and Letters*,† tells us that :

Rag-time is the product of the stage nigger, not of the real negro. I have never found any negro use syncopation ; he beats time by a

\* *The Rhythm of Prose*, pp. 5-7.

† January, 1920.

tap of the foot, followed by a clap of the hands. The foot tap always comes on the strong beat and the hand clap on the weak one. Since the bare foot makes no sound, the casual observer thinks he is listening to syncopation.

After considering these facts, we need hardly say that poetry, being a "one part" music, cannot be syncopated; it has nothing to mark the beat. There is no need to go out of our way to explain simple rhythms like

The one remains, the many change and pass.



as syncopation.\* Syncopation is a matter of accents, and although the quantities of "many" do not fit the regular pattern the accent does. But even if we take both syllables of "many" as short, and say that "change" has come down in the midst of the bar not at the beginning, still this is not syncopation. Perhaps the nearest we come to syncopation in poetry is that line,† famous in prosody:

Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death.

Somehow to call this a composite of three spondees, or six monosyllabic feet and two iambs, does not express our feeling about it. We do feel a blow first with one hand then with the other, as if two hammers were swinging in directly opposite rhythms. But not enough is gained by the simile to compensate for its disadvantages.

\* T. S. Omrod, *A Study of Metre*, p. 79. I do not think he uses the word "syncopation" of this, but his musical analogy is syncopation.

† *Paradise Lost*, II, 621.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RHYTHM IN PARTICULAR.

THOUGH we agree in general that the foot is the first entity in rhythm, and though we refused to discriminate between conflicting theories, concretely there is not this agreement, and practically we must decide what constitutes the foot. Now, whether the foot is a bar, a centroid, or a monopressure, I take it as some sort of *subjective* division, a grouping of particles, or attention span, or what not, that takes an objective form. The poet is conscious in some way of his feet, and the reader too is conscious of them. We may take it also that the concrete, objective foot must coincide with the subjective impression of the foot. Since we have assumed as an axiom in these pages that we should speak from the facts of our poetic impression only, that we discuss only what we hear, and that what we do not hear is not relevant, and since the foot is a subjective as well as objective reality, something to the ear and the mind, if we have no preconceived theory about feet we should be able to determine them by ear or from subjective impression. In this way, I should divide the rhythmical sentence which Dr. Scripture analyses in *The Nature of Verse*—“Somebody said that it couldn’t be done”—into these feet: (Somebody said) (that it couldn’t) (be done), or conceivably: (Somebody) (said), etc. Dr. Scripture tells us that the divisions on the phonograph record are “that it couldn’t” and “be done”. “Somebody said” might mean two things: either, with an emphasised “somebody” indicating that one

person said, in which case it would be a foot by itself, " said " being another—the mind having two ideas, the two would be separated subjectively—or, as the speaker of this record took it, with " somebody " of no importance being an adjunct to " said ", indicating that it has been said ; the two words forming one idea, attention span or whatever we call it, are not divided subjectively, any more than they are objectively. Of course we could divide the sentence subjectively into dactyls. (Somebody) (said that it) (couldn't be) (done). " Anybody with a prejudice can be made to hear anything."\* But we must correct our prejudice by our reason. If the foot is an entity, our mind should be able to stop on it. As a mental *neum*, or seed thought, something that is one to the brain, we cannot have feet like " said that it ", or " couldn't be " ; " that it " cannot logically be separated from " couldn't " nor " be " from " done ". Logically we cannot have a dactyl rhythm here, and therefore rhythmically we cannot. The division also tenable theoretically (Somebod) (y said) (that it) (couldn't) (be done) is even more impossible ; the mind cannot walk with these feet, and the foot is precisely the smallest grouping of syllables that the mind can move with. This heresy needs emphasizing. Dr. Scripture brings forward many relevant facts in support of it, which I cannot quote, as the whole article should (in both senses) be read for its real significance. He shows that we ought not to talk of verse as iambic, trochaic, dactylic or anapaestic. The study of phonograph records proves that our old-fashioned methods of scanning represent nothing real objectively. We have just agreed, at least I hope we have, that such scensions represent nothing subjective. This does not mean that there are no such things as dactylic feet, or that we never find lines like " The stag at eve had drunk his fill " with each foot a real iamb, a real subjective entity. But it does mean that *Paradise Lost* is

\* Same article.

not written in “iambic metre”. It means also, that so far from its being an exception, the foot ending *must* coincide with a word ending.

Prosodists tend to object to this way of looking at things, and chiefly for two reasons. One, as stated by Saintsbury, goes thus :

Even in more elaborate prose we still have a tendency to make pauses at word ends, but as this prose becomes rhythmical we divide words more ; and in poetry except in so far as our abundant monosyllables prevent it, we positively avoid, save for special reasons, coincidence of foot- and word-end.\*

Abundant scientific evidence proves that the first half of this is wrong. At best it is taking personal subjective impression for an actual fact. None of the dozen or so (putting their number at its lowest) phonograph records of English speech show this break, these pauses at word ends ; neither prose nor poetry has them. Mr. MacDonach’s idea † that modern English differs from Italian or the Classics or Irish in being a *staccato* language is an almost Sein Fein insult. The sound continues as unbroken in “Fair as a star” as in “immemorial elms”. A monosyllabic and a polysyllabic poetry differ, but not to the ear. “Fair as a star” is a stream of lovely sound, like a necklace of gems, each note of which (to emulate Shakespeare) is a perfect jewel to the mind, but not less a flowing stream than “immemorial”, a stream in the mist. In “immemorial” the mind listens and stands still ; it listens more than it thinks, for who will give us at once and without thinking the precise meaning of “immemorial elms”? In “Fair as a star” the music runs through the thought, the thought moves and, in moving, makes this flowing music. Monosyllabic poetry follows the thought in more detail, but is not therefore discontinuous. A multi-syllabic word for one idea is a flourish without precise significance. “Paraphernalia”—one idea and a stream

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 457.

† *Thomas Campion and the Art of English Poetry*, p. 86.

of sound ; “ *La Belle Dame sans merci* ”—a stream of sound, and ideas that move and change and flow with the flux of the music. Possibly this extraordinary belief is a relic of classical times when they could not have monosyllabic music—a most extraordinary survival, this vestige of the middle ages ! The old ballads are not afraid of the native style of English metre, which Wordsworth championed in the *Lyrical Ballads* ; his simple diction implied reviving a monosyllabic music. The “ law ” \* forbidding monosyllabic poetry may hold of the eighteenth century though in that century Daniel Webb, in his *Observations on the correspondence between music and poetry*, made the acutest observation on the difference between the two styles of poetic music :

Monosyllables bring our ideas into a closer order and more immediate comparison ; consequently their relations become more striking. The feeblest and heaviest lines in our language are those which are over-charged with polysyllables.†

Monosyllables for clear visioned poetry, polysyllables for cloudy ! The thought, not the music of words, becomes more separate and distinct in monosyllabic poetry. Neither the poets of our own century nor those of the sixteenth and seventeenth are afraid of monosyllabic lines. Donne knows how to write in the native way. Shakespeare has lovely examples of this style—

Take oh take those lips away.

Fear no more the heat o’ the sun.

Home art gone and ta’en thy wages.

I am slain by a fair cruel maid.

—and the other Elizabethans,‡ as a glance through Palgrave, where the poems are chosen precisely for their lyric quality, will show :

\* For its categoric statement see Schipper, *History of English Versification*, p. 135.

† P. 106.

‡ Including the Jacobean !

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—  
 Nay I have done, you get no more of me ;  
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart.

—*Drayton.*

And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
 Say nay ! say nay ! for shame,  
 To save thee from the blame  
 Of all my grief and grame.  
 And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
 Say nay ! say nay !

—*Wyatt.*

Come live with me and be my love.

—*Marlowe.*

It is extraordinary that this idea about monosyllables and foot endings should persist among lovers of English poetry, but perhaps it is one of those errors of theory which live because they are hardly worth the killing.

The other view which sees no contradiction in having the foot division in the middle of a word, looks at the rhythmic design in the abstract. If we scan a line in “longs” and “shorts”,\* the pattern  $\sim' \sim' \sim' \sim' \sim'$  may give a series of iambs to the eye though the real division of the feet is not iambic. The prosodist who works on this method thinks of rhythm as something separate from the other constituents of poetry; as a sort of pattern or mould into which the content of words is poured. But we cannot consider rhythm thus distinct ; it is formed by the other constituents of poetry and helps in characterising them. The metrical design is real only as the line of the profile is real. Strictly speaking there is no such thing. We get a sense of sharply cut, definite line looking from one angle in silhouette, but it is a false impression—a partial one. Prosody on these lines attracts tidy minds ; it lends itself to cataloguing, with lists of exceptions and definitions of peculiarities—the very thing for systematic prosody ! Here we shall formulate no system of prosody ;

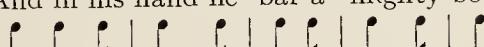
\* In Saintsbury's meaning.

our business is not with systems of metrical design but with the facts of that part of poetry which we hear. Only if we persistently hear the iambic foot in a context of trochaic words, can we call the foot iambic; then reading poetry would be like dancing in syncopation, against the music. We reply that this sort of poetry does not *feel* syncopated. That we should get lines of iambs to the eye and not to the ear should not surprise us, though I doubt if we should get sufficient to support our iambic systems if it were not for another licence—that of false accentuation.

We may take Schipper's\* scansion of Chaucer's Prologue, line 103, as an example :

And hé was clád in côte and hood of gréne.

To the ear of an unsophisticated reader “he” is unaccented, since there is, in the context, no logical emphasis on it. So, in a few lines farther down where the same rhythm is echoed :

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe,  


we should not accent “in”. How Chaucer and his contemporaries read these lines is a question for history. The answer I do not know; but I should say that Chaucer, writing in English for the unlearned gentry of his day, writing at all events, from an attitude neither cloisteral nor academic, wrote and read in the natural English accentuation. His rhythm is known to take many more liberties with the abstract type than Pope's, and, being so much less sophisticated, he possibly read his poetry with the accents of common sense and just feeling. We have noted several times how a poet does in some intangible way force us to hear the accent he writes, inexplicable except that he writes obeying the law of some rhythmic impulse, and sympathetic human readers with the same rhythmical nature, tend to find that the easiest and loveliest rhythm which the poet wrote. Schipper

\* *History of English Versification*, p. 135.

quotes "And he was clad in cote and hood of grene" to show how bad are lines where the foot ending comes at the end of a word ; the real badness lies in his false accentuation ; these accents make it monotonous, inflexible, not like Chaucer ; it sounds strange and out of the picture, as it would sound fitting in Pope, save that Pope, writing thus stiffly, would tend to avoid real iambically-divided words for relief. Nevertheless the question of false accentuation does seem a matter rather for history than for prosody. I should imagine a good case for its use in the rhymes of the ballads : "He had not been in fair Scotland", "Here am I thou false bishop". They add, somehow, to the charm and *naïveté*, as well as to the musical effect. The Elizabethans and the poets of the earlier seventeenth century simply could not have gone in for false accentuation, not in their natural writers like Shakespeare. It would have been too contrary to the spirit of their time—an age of sweet native music. Scholars might be liable to this artificiality when they were not also practical men like Milton ; humorists might indulge in it for fun, and third-rate poets, if there were any in those days, might have fallen into this pit, though I hardly believe they would. False accentuation would not suggest itself to poets who knew so well how to make music of the native accent. They aimed to write musically not regularly, and as we know, if by nothing else, by the setting of their poetry to music, the lay reader like the musician accented logically. An age that loved free rhythms in its songs must have liked them in its poetry. False accentuation arises only with incompetence or with the desire for smoothness and regularity. Scansions like

In thrilling region of thick ribbed ice \*

—*Measure for Measure*, III, i.

\* Miller, *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse*, p. 9. " = secondary accent and ' principal.

are revolting. This is to take the music and magic out of Shakespeare. Ice that is "thick" without emphasis does not "thrill" us very much. One cannot imagine Shakespeare accenting the line falsely when the natural accents fall so rhythmically. The eighteenth-century prosodians believed in false accentuation ; they objected to foot and word endings coming together ; they believed in *elision* ;\* in fact, they established orthodox prosody. Even admitting that they interpreted the scansion of their poetry by Classical candle light, we must scan them on their own method. We ought to take historic setting into account ; we perhaps ought to scan Pope differently from Milton. Thus, for Pope :

Close by those meads, for ev- er crowned with flowers,



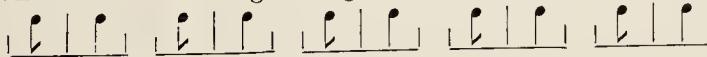
and thus for Milton :

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flowers.



Line 4 of the same canto according to Pope is :

Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name,



according to Milton it would be :

Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name.



As a splendid example of trochaic words forming a chain of iambs, we have :

\* I take it that Saintsbury, Vol. II of his *History*, pp. 240 and 540, and Mitford, pp. 105-6 of his *Inquiry*, are right in denying that the Elizabethans *elided*, and more or less confining that absurd habit to the eighteenth century and its admirers.

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom

Of for- eign ty- rants, or of nymphs at home;

Here thou, Great Ann- a ! whom three realms ob- ey,

Dost sometimes coun- sel take—and sometimes tea.

though I cannot help feeling that Pope has written trochees. *The Rape of the Lock* is very dull read conscientiously in iambs, and in spite of the theories of his day, I am inclined to believe—I am at least sure that I for one do not read it like this. Even in that age of reason, 'tis possible that eighteenth-century poetry was less strictly regular than eighteenth-century prosody. In modern times, scensions vary with the poet, the rule being for logical accent not metrical. Miller may be right in giving "as" a secondary accent in "The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung," though I prefer to think that Goldsmith, who was an Irishman even in the eighteenth century, would have scanned it: "The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung," giving it

length for smoothness but not accent; that were to take the situation too solemnly. But I am sure he is wrong when he scans Milton's line: "Their 'enemies' who serve 'idols' with God" (P.R., III, 432), and Browning's: "Then smilingly, contentedly, awakes"; "idols" =  $\text{p} \mid \text{p}$  is ridiculous, "enemies", "smilingly", "contentedly" only less so. On the contrary we all agree with Omord \* in giving no accent to "From" and "to" in :

\* *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 89.

From her kennel beneath the rock  
 She maketh answer to the clock,  
 Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour,

though we cannot allow that

If in music a note occupied the place which "From" or "to" occupies in Coleridge's lines . . . it could not fail to be accented.\*

Of course the notes corresponding to "to" and "From" in a musical rhythm corresponding to the rhythm of Coleridge's quotation could be accented, though one cannot see why they must. But if he means that, were Coleridge's words set to music, then "to" and "From" must be accented, we must contradict it emphatically. Even when it does seem necessary to put an unaccented word like "to" at the beginning of a bar, as frequently in regularly-barred music, this does not mean that it is accented. In *Rose Cheek'd Laura* the phrase

Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's Silent music,  
 | ♫ ♫(♪) | ♫ ♫(♪) ♫ ♫(♪) | ♫ ♫(♪) | ♫ ♫(♪) | ♫ ♫(♪)

if translated literally into equal-barred music, must have "with" at the beginning of a bar if the quantities are rightly rendered, unless the rhythm is tortured into some such form

as | ♫<sup>2</sup> ♫ | ♫ ♫ | ] ♫ ♫ | ♫ ♫ etc., and must not if the accent is. Omont is possibly thinking of this sort of dilemma. Most composers would let "with" begin the bar and trust the singer not to accent it; the composer would not merely wish the poetic rhythm to have its way against the musical; if he intended to follow the rhythm of the words—and this is the only condition that makes the discussion of his music relevant here—the musical rhythm should require the accent as little as the word does. Present-day writers on the correspondence or the lack of correspondence between music and poetry sometimes give one the impression that they have only heard songs which can never have been

\* *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century*, p. 89.

intended to mirror the rhythm of the words. To assume these as typical is most unfair. The mistakes of song writers—and for our purpose an entire disregard for the music of the poetry he sets, is a mistake in a song writer—are not really relevant. But a purist may object to the lengthening of words like "with" or "to" or "from". Campion wrote *Rose Cheek'd Laura* as an example of trochaic rhythm with spondees inwoven; "with" must be long if "with thy" is a trochee; there is even some case for holding it accented. And when lengthened, it becomes more significant. The sentence means, not "sing *thou* smoothly", but "sing *along with* thy beauty's silent music"; "with" is not a mere piece of twine. The sense of threading is strong; we have *thou* on one side and *thy beauty's silent music* on the other; the relationship *with* is vital. The poetic and rhythmic significance have not clashed. Only on a superficial view is this a false quantity. We can find a similar poetic significance in "as" of "The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung", or in "to" of "She maketh answer to the clock". The lengthening makes the metre smoother and brings out latent significance. False accents and quantities we cannot tolerate distort the rhythm and misinterpret the meaning:

Their énemis" who serve idols with God.  
In thrilli ng région of thick ribbed ice.

Among other licences necessary to conventional prosodies is the *extra-metrical syllable*.\* The term contradicts itself.

\* Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, p. 47, asks :

"How does an extra-metrical syllable, occurring in the midst of a line, differ from the supernumerary syllable of a common trisyllabic foot? For instance, how do these lines differ?

(1) 'To quench the drouth of Phoe(bus), which as they taste'  
(*Comus*, 66).

(2) 'To set himself in glor(y) above his peers' (*Paradise Lost*, 1, 39). The answer is that in the second the extra syllable is made rhythmic

It is an innocent way of pleading guilty—syllables which do not fit our scheme and have to be apologised for. Similarly we cannot admit *anacrusis* and *catalexis*. *Anacrusis* suggests that the syllable is outside the scheme, a stammer or hesitation before the rhythm starts, not part of the very essence of the foot it helps to form. When Schipper tells us \* that one important difference between middle English and Old English alliterative verse resolves itself into the former becoming ascending by allowing an initial *anacrusis* in types not allowed in the latter, he is talking of poetic creation in terms of mechanical arrangement. We find this sort of classification :

Lines or rhythmical sections consisting of complete feet . . . are called acatalectic. . . . If, however, the last foot of a line or of a rhythmical section be characterised by the omission of the last syllable . . . [it] is called *catalectic* :—

*Acatalectic iambic tetrameter.*

Come listen to my mournful tale, | ye tender hearts and lovers  
dear.

*Catalectic iambic tetrameter.*

They caught their spears, their horses ran | as though there had  
been thunder.

---

by its brevity, in the first it is made rhythmical by there being a pause after it.”

We symbolise the distinction like this :

To quench the drouth of Phoebus, which as they taste.  
  
 To set himself in glory a- bove his peers.  


We should not say that they are “made rhythmical”, they are rhythmical; “in glory” is an amphibrach in a context of iambs; “of Phoebus” is an amphibrach forming a sort of cadence, followed, if you like, by a rest, the succeeding phrase beginning on an accented syllable. Unless we start from a fixed rhythmic system there is no difficulty.

\* *History of English Versification*, p. 91.

*Acatalectic trochaic tetrameter.*

Werther had a love for Charlotte, | such as words would never  
utter.

*Catalectic trochaic tetrameter.*

Ah ! what pleasant visions haunt me, | as I gaze upon the sea.  
A line in which the whole last foot is supplied by a pause is called  
*brachycatalectic*.

*Brachycatalectic iambic tetrameter.*

The Britons thus departed hence, | seven Kingdoms here begone.  
*Brachycatalectic trochaic tetrameter.*

Hästen, Lord, to rescue me, | and set me save from trouble.\*  
and so on he goes. This is to classify on the same principle as we classify authors in a library catalogue in alphabetical order ; their place on the list gives no indication of their nature. Such a system is irrelevant to the real matter of prosody ; it tells us nothing about poetry, only how the poetry stands with regard to the system ; it is unintelligible without its theory. Moreover, it postulates prosodians interested not so much in the poetic effect of rhythms as in the working out of a system of scansion ; it alienates the amateur reader of poetry, the one who reads from love, and confines prosody to the professional reader, who professes to know all about what he reads—surely a pernicious and invidious tendency in prosody ! † Even people who are not mere professionals come on us with a terrific nomenclature for simple rhythms. “The trochaic half-dimelters catalectic” ! ‡ By a severe mathematical process we deduce 'u'u'. What we actually read is :

Silent, silent night  
Quench the holy light  
Of thy torches bright.

\* *History of English Versification*, p. 127. I quote only one example of each type.

† Egerton Smith, *Principles of English Metre*, gives these terms a real meaning, by assuming that all rhythm is made up in equal bars, silences of the requisite duration taking the place of the missing syllables.

‡ Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 17.

Somehow one would rather have a lovely flower unnamed if nothing better can be found for it. It does add to the romance of a sundew to be called "Drosera Longifolia". If science can find musical names for its flora, why cannot we escape hideous ones for ours? *Drosera Longifolia* has a place in the floral catalogue determined by its real structure; our flower is placed where it will most easily fit our artificial *a priori* scheme. We must protest against the attitude that

verse in general is distinguished from prose by the fact that its divisions are not conditioned by sense, but by an arbitrary arrangement of words which has nothing necessarily and in some of the very best poetry has little actually to do with sense at all, and is entirely concerned with sound.\*

or

All our poets, from Dryden to Chaucer, have under metrical exigency made use of a secondary accent which may have been merely potential in prose.†

If poetry is a natural thing then the arrangement of words in metre cannot be arbitrary; there is no such thing as *metrical exigency* in genuine poetry. If the arrangement of words had little to do with sense and were entirely concerned with sound, sensible people would not read poetry; they would prefer music outright. The proof of our objection lies in ourselves; we who love poetry all *know* that this attitude is not our attitude, and never was the attitude of any reader of poetry until he came to study prosody. If the results of such prosody tallied with our experience, we could accept them though they had not previously occurred to us, but they directly contradict it. This sort of prosody explains nothing but itself. We arrive at any really illuminating idea independently of, and very often in despite of our systems of prosody. When Saintsbury ‡ says that in

\* Saintsbury, Introduction to Loring, *The Rhymer's Lexicon*.

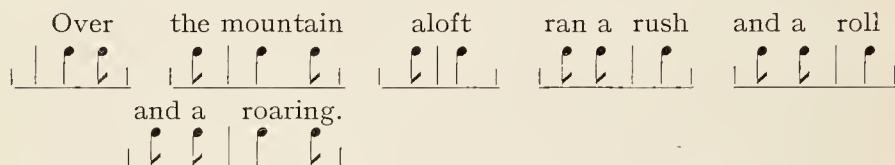
† Miller, *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse*, p. 74.

‡ *History of English Prosody*, Vol. I, p. 402.

English the dactylic measure is always “‘ tipping up’ \* and becoming anapaëtic with anacrusis,” dividing it thus:

Ov|er the moun|tain aloft|ran a rush|and a roll|and a roar|ing,  
—KINGSLEY, *Andromeda*.

his statement is literally true, the line which began with a dactylic intention or tendency does actually shift its centre of balance to a rising metre, the last anapæst having a feminine ending, thus:

Over      the mountain      aloft      ran a rush      and a roll  


It starts with a trochee, changes its centre of gravity to a rising-falling foot (amphibrach), becomes an iamb, and having wheedled its way out of the exotic falling metre into a rising, pursues its course gaily in anapæsts. It *has* “ tipped up ” in the middle. His system forces Saintsbury, who discovered this tendency of the English “ dactylic measure ”, to scan it as if it were standing on its head from the beginning. How does the line “ tip up ” if it starts anapaëtic ? Saintsbury’s method of scanning contradicts his figure of speech. He scans on an external theory that his own intimate experience does not accept. If he really read as his system of scansion implies, how could the “ tipping up ” description have occurred to him ? It is all up with the dactyl from the beginning on that method. So different is this real, relevant, and acute observation from the scheme of prosody it moves in, that it positively reads like a metaphor.

Mis-readings to fit preconceived ideas of scansion are, of course, not confined to orthodox prosodies ; perhaps they are hardly to be avoided in any theory of prosody that claims to be universally applicable. Our musical method has the advantage of fitting itself to any scansion. It is a method

\* As indeed it must, because of the accent on the rhyme.

of recording facts, not a system. Perhaps we ought to show how it can explain effects or impressions which the old systems find difficult or leave to the nebular recognition of literary appreciation. Omord notices \* that though

The weight of all the hopes of half the world

—*Princess*, Sec. 4.

and

Say, Muse, their Names, then known, who first, who last,

—*Paradise Lost*, I. 376.

are in the same metre, their effect is different ; at some length, struggling with the poor means offered him by conventional prosody, he tells us what in musical symbols can be said in two seconds, that the feet of the first are  $\text{f} \mid \text{f}$  iambs, those of the second  $\text{f} \mid \text{f}$ . Guest † gives as examples of the same metre :

Void | of sor|row : and void | of care |.

—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

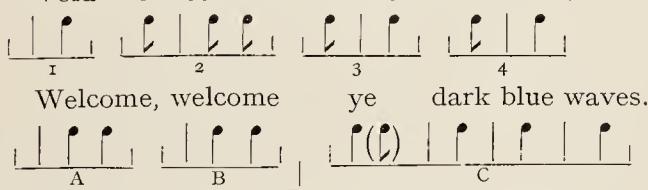
and :

Wel|come, wel|come : ye dark | blue waves |.

—*Childe Harold*, I. 13. 10.

Their metre is different, and in this way :

Void of sorrow and void of care.



Welcome, welcome ye dark blue waves.

They are woven of different material. Two phrases, rhythmic because  $\text{f} \mid \text{f} \mid \text{f}$  balances  $\text{f}$ , and  $\text{f} \mid \text{f}$  balances  $\text{f} \mid \text{f}$ , make up

\* *A Study of Metre*, pp. 53-6.

Notice the monosyllables in these lines. Omord might not have accepted my explanation. He says the difference is between a "slenderer" and a "fuller syllabification". He finds "syllabification" difficult to define.

† *History of English Rhythms*, p. 190. : = *cæsura* ; | shows where the feet divide.

the first, where 2 balances 1, and 4 balances 3, while  $(3 + 4)$  balances  $(1 + 2)$ . The effect of the second is heavy and trochaic. We cannot in the same way say that B balances A ; it repeats A. C balances  $(A + B)$  by a sort of development out of, a resolution of, the repeated trochees. Its rhythm is stiff, formal and unbending, so different from the sparkling dance of " Void of sorrow and void of care " that it is almost ridiculous to find them given as examples of the same metre. On the next page of Guest we find these classed together. I give both his and my scansions :

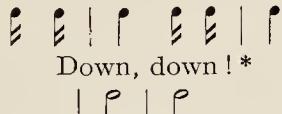
—CAEDMON, *Genesis*, 1378.

Lear, I. 4. 218.

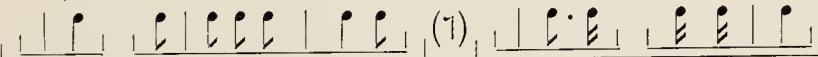
Psychological experimenters and prosodians of both poetry and music have made some attempt to account for the characteristic effect of different feet, a few of which I give in Appendix II. All of them are right for some poetry but not necessarily for all. I think we can hardly predict the effect of a foot given in the abstract. We never get a merely rhythmic, much less a merely "laboratory" iamb or trochée in poetry ; even if we did, its effect would depend on the rhythmic context, on the part it takes in the balancing of the phrase, or on some other rhythmic consideration. If we say in the abstract, the iambic is an easier and more graceful rhythm than the trochaic, immediately the graciousness of some of Campion's trochaic rhythms comes to mind and contradicts us, not to mention that the Greeks thought the rising the more vigorous rhythm. The same or a similar effect can be got by different feet. We might compare a few of the ways by which poets have imitated a falling sen-

\* Guest is responsible for using *th* instead of the Old English symbol, not me!

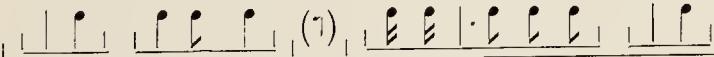
sation. Shelley gives us a troubled tumbling by a rising rhythm checked and jostled by monosyllabic feet in :

To the deep, to the deep,  
  
 Down, down ! \*

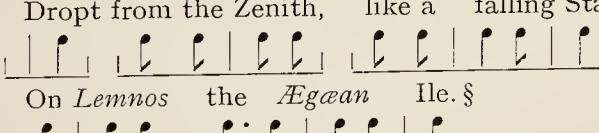
Milton very often starts from a solid accent and lets the unaccented syllables fall away, as if with sudden loosening, to another less strong accent :

Shoots > invisible > vertue even to the deep.†  


Milton's arrow drops with clean and unjagged wings where Shelley's flight is congested and buffeted. Or again :

Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.‡  


The couple of short notes after the rest, and the pressing forward of the | | | | bar make us feel again that unexpected somersault when we fell over the banisters a long time ago. In another passage we drop with the very motion of a falling star :

To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,  
 A Summers day ; and with the setting Sun  
 Dropt from the Zenith, like a falling Star,  
  
 On Lemnos the Aegean Ile. §  


A sudden drop, but a dignified, in the gliding rhythm of | | | | | | ! The landing is broken gently, | | | |, then | | | |, as a sea-gull touches the sand and runs along with

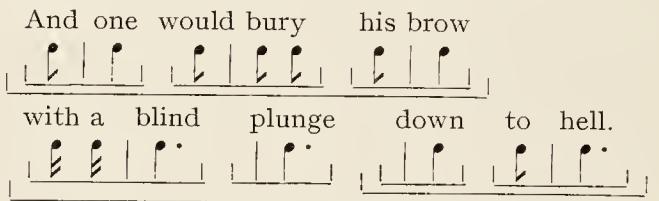
\* *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, sc. 3.

† *Paradise Lost*, III, 586.

‡ *Ibid.*, VI, 866.

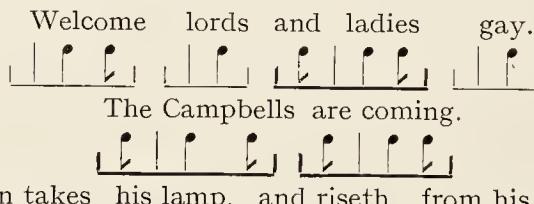
§ *Ibid.*, I, 745.

folding wings. A curiously lovely descent for a fallen angel, as we might expect from Milton with a mind too full of austere beauty to be hideous in his devils, unlike Spenser, who can paint a Cave of Error as if in reaction from a too sweet loveliness! In *Abt Vogler* Browning gives us a sensation of falling different from either Milton's or Shelley's:



The effect is got by making the metre heavier, changing from a rising to what is nearer a falling metre, not by the lightening or loosening of Milton's rhythms, or the checked driving movement of Shelley's.

Conversely, the same foot can give different effects:



Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knee.\*

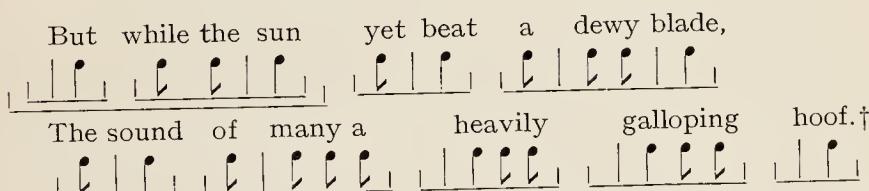
It is not altogether fancy that makes the first amphibrach seem gracious, the second boisterous, and gives us the motion of stiff effort on "and riseth", with a little totter on "from his knee", or at least, it is a fancy shared by the poets. We tend to interpret rhythms onomatopoeically, to read the meaning into the motion. If we have soft and cooing breezes, we read the rhythm softly and cooingly; if we have gusty blasts, we read gustily. This is, I should say, the right way to read. I think Saintsbury has misread *Christabel* where in support of his contention that the rhythm is determined by "purely metrical considerations", he says:

\* Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

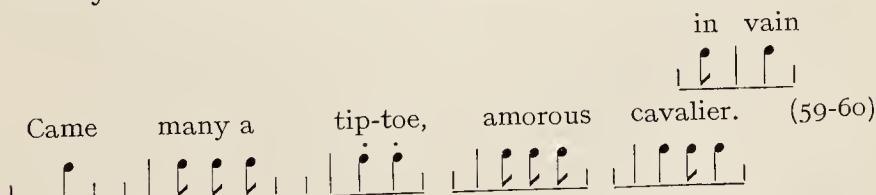
If agreement with imagery is the thing aimed at why is there no gallop in "The palfrey was as fleet as wind"? and why is there in "And the Spring comes slowly up this way."



If we read about the spring coming slowly up this way, with a gallop, we have read it wrongly. The words lend themselves to slow enunciation—"spring" followed by "comes", followed by "slow", while "up" in this context is a laborious word. Incidentally the palfrey does not gallop because the statement is that "The palfrey was as fleet as wind"; compared with the fleetness of wind a gallop is a slow and cumbrous motion. We notice how lithe and springy is "The palfrey" and the racing movement we can read into "was as fleet as wind", where the final *s* and *t* sounds help the effect. We can see how much better this is than a galloping motion if we turn to an example of galloping "feet" in Tennyson:



The sensation of galloping comes not merely from the dactyl motion, but from something imitative of the meaning in the sound of the words themselves. Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes* has many very delicate rhythmic onomatopœia similarly helped out by phonetic imitation, as the *staccato* of "tip-toe" in the following, where we see a different sort of dactyl, giving a totally different feeling from Tennyson's galloping one:



\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, p. 57. The scansion is mine.

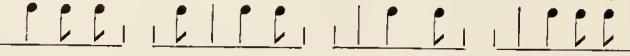
† *Geraint and Enid*.

It has the very motion of slippered diffidence. As unambiguously onomatopœic is

With plume, tiara, and all rich array,



Numerous as shadows haunting fairly (39-40)



where the dropping rhythm after the vigorous rising rhythm, points the contrast between the “argent revelry” and the dream shadows of the brain. There are many more :

They told her how, upon St. Agnes’ Eve,

(46)

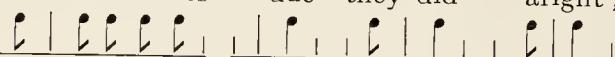
Young virgins might have visions of delight,

And soft adorings from their loves receive

Upon the honey’d middle of the night,



If ceremonies due they did aright;



As, supperless to bed they must retire.



The flutter of the four- $\text{bpm}$  bars gives the breathless *sotto-voceism* of “old dames” telling of mysteries ; we may even see in it a twilight fire and shadows dancing on the nursery wall.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose.

(136)



How like the graceful majesty of a ship coming over the waves, does the sudden thought move to the full-blown rose !

”Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :

(325)



 is a familiar window rhythm ; the difference between “flaw-blown sleet” and “full-blown rose”, though phonetic,

seems to become rhythmic too. We can have few better examples of a string of real iambs imitating meaning than

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes. (64)



It is interesting to compare this with an even more purely iambic line in *Paradise Lost*, which we shall quote later,\* and which feels like flying rather than dancing.

To predict the effect of any given foot is impossible. The problem is more difficult and complicated than we might expect. Possibly none of these rhythms which we found so expressive of their meaning, would suggest that meaning, were it not indicated by the words, by the onomatopœia of the words as well as by their symbolism, and perhaps some of them, even so, are imitative only to the imagination of the individual reader..

Gliding meteorous, as Evening Mist.†



How much of the floating evanescence of this is due to the rhythm, where four slow-moving quavers (Js) slip along without any accent, how much to the liquid coalescence of the vowels and vowel-like ‡ consonants with just enough of the s sound to give the shimmer, the breaking, the movement of mist, and how much to the imagination of the reader, is a question that can hardly be answered.

We have seen that the effect of any given foot is too incalculable to predict, and we can imagine that on our method, the number and variety of them is a matter rather for mathematics than for prosody. There remain the problems of their phrasing; arranged promiscuously, promiscuous feet do not make a rhythm. Though the essential laws of rhythmic juxtaposition may be discoverable, I do

\* P. 146.

† *Paradise Lost*, XII, 629.

‡ Not used as a phonetic term, the m, l, n and r sounds.

not pretend to have discovered them, but admit quite frankly, trusting the originality of the admission will excuse its honesty, that I have no system of prosody because I do not know in the abstract why one series of movements should be rhythmic and another not. Instead of putting forward a system of prosody, I can only illustrate a method of scanning, and show some of the rhythmic factors at work. Most important, much more important than the feet themselves, or the kind of feet that will juxtapose, is the grouping of them into phrases. The individuality of a poet's rhythms depends more than on anything else on how his feet are arranged, on his phrasing, on the way he achieves the balance of his rhythm. Ideally we should have a separate prosody for every original poet, but prosody, even in our hands, not having reached Utopia, we can only illustrate from a few selections of one or two poets. Before doing this, however, we may as well examine what general principles are obvious.

Guest tells us that :

The pauses which serve for the regulation of the rhythm are three in number : the *final*, *middle*, and *sectional*. The first occurs at the end of a verse [*i.e.* line], the second divides it into two sections, and the third is found in the midst of one of these sections. It is of great importance that these pauses should not be confounded with such as are only wanted for the purposes of grammar or of emphasis.\*

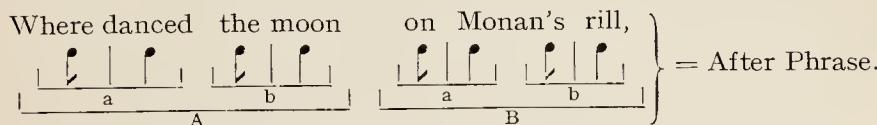
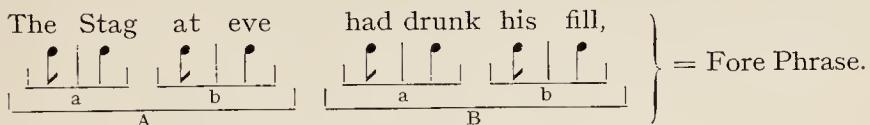
Guest may possibly have been quite ignorant of Prout when he said this, and yet if we turn to musical sentences we find a remarkable parallel. Prout † takes an 8-bar (or 8-foot) sentence and divides it in the middle into "fore phrase" and "after phrase"; each of which in turn he divides into two sections, "A" and "B", each section being composed of two "motives" or feet, "a" and "b" :



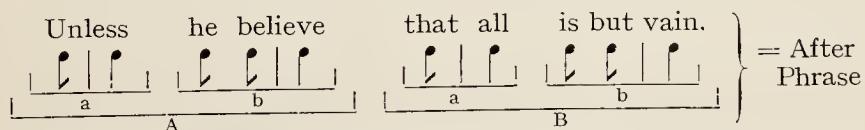
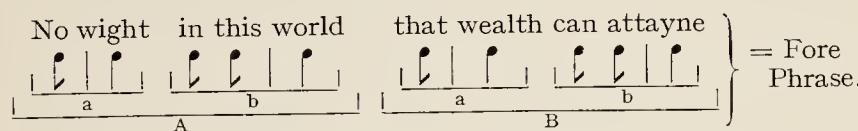
\* *History of English Rhythms*, p. 144.

† *Musical Form*, pp. 23-8.

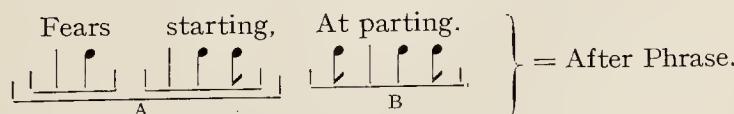
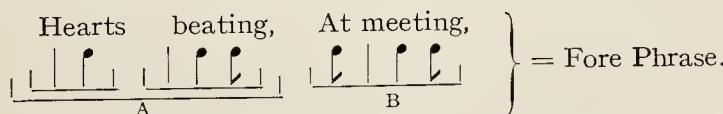
This is the simplest type of phrasing in both music and poetry. It is the type for the octosyllabic couplet :



allowing, for the moment, the splitting up of "Monan's". We notice how the subjective, meaningful divisions coincide with the rhythmic in detail, in "A" and "B", "a" and "b", "fore phrase" and "after phrase". We do literally think in these groupings. As a less simple rhythm, we may take one Guest \* says was very common in the early half of the sixteenth century, though of course he scans it differently. The sections and phrases are identical, though the feet, "a" and "b", differ :

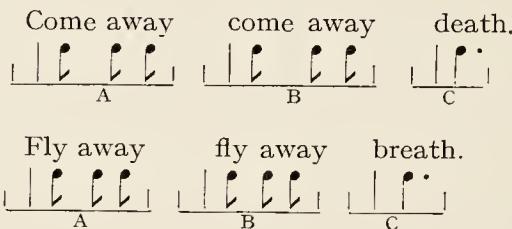


Still simple, though less simple than these, are rhythms with identical "phrases" and different "sections" :



\* *History of English Rhythms*, p. 203.

The indivisible “B” is not exceptional and has a parallel in music. That “A” is a composite “section” and “B” not, does not appear to disturb the rhythmic balance at all. Here are very simple triply-balanced phrases, one we have in music too :



Perhaps we might group the “A”’s and “B”’s together and say they were balanced by the “C”’s. Triply-balanced phrasing can be very complex. I do not think we have made a mistake in taking these as simple examples of it.

We need not go into the other methods of phrasing, or the deviations from this type in music. It is no more and no less the rule than in poetry. To compare musical and poetical methods of phrasing would be an interesting study, but a research in itself, and if relevant, not necessary here. But one difference between Prout and Guest strikes us. Guest talks of *pauses*, by which he means what are generally called *cæsuras*. He believes not only in the commonly accepted middle *cæsura*, but in a line and section *cæsura*, and rightly so. For what is a *cæsura*? Not a grammatical stop, obviously! Nor a “rest”! We do not follow it by a moment’s silence; there is one after “eve” in the quotation from the *Lady of the Lake*. It is not a pause; in the next line of that quotation, “danced”, though at the less felt *cæsura*, is a longer syllable than “moon”. It is in fact not objective, not something we should be surprised to miss in a phonograph record, but subjective, a consciousness of the division where the balance of the rhythm slips over to the answering phrase, or in a lesser degree where the sections,

or even feet, join. The middle *cæsura* has appropriated the term because the line ending is already sufficiently objectified and the middle is the next strongly felt division. Music has this cæsural feeling too.\* Indeed, Dr. Abdy Williams, in *The Rhythm of Modern Music*,† uses the word *cæsura* to indicate the instrumental equivalent for the break for breath at the end of a phrase, and since—although the theory that the necessity for breathing somewhere originated the phrase may have a certain truth—for practical purposes it is the phrasing that determines the breathing places, the musical idea of the *cæsura* is the same as the prosodic one. We could write our old tune out thus, with a “slur” to mark the subjective phrasing :



A fiddler playing a bow to the note would objectify the phrasing by lightening the tone off a bit at the end of each slur, and making the first note of the second and fourth slurred passages lean towards the first accent of the new section, while there would be a sensation of a fresh attack

\* By the way, it was apparently music, or the singing of poetry that brought the cæsural feeling or necessity into prominence in English poetry. Gascoigne (quoted by Guest, *History of English Rhythms*, p. 184, whence also comes the quotation to follow, from the *Reulis and Cautelis*), writing in the sixteenth century, said the *Cæsuras* “have bene first devised (as should seeme) by the musicians”; King James, in the fifteenth century, advocates making a break in the *middle* of the line, for if the pause be after “the first syllable of a polysyllable, the music schall make you sa to rest in the middes of that word.” He says farther that there is no need for a pause in a short line because “musique makes no rest in the middes of thame.”

One can easily see that any song sung to a simply-balanced 8-bar rhythm must, if it is not to clash with the musical rhythm, have a *cæsura* in the middle of the line, must in fact, balance in the same way as the music. The sort of music Gascoigne and King James are talking of, was possibly arbitrarily chosen or composed without regard to the words, and in something like this simple type of rhythm.

† P. 27.

‡ For meaning of  $\cup$  and  $>$  signs, see p. 100.

after the second, strong *cæsura*. A singer would presumably breathe only after this strong *cæsura*, and would not pause on it ; indeed, one of the first things we learn in singing is to take the necessary time for breathing off the last note of a phrase, so that we may be on time at the beginning of the succeeding phrase. Yet we can feel the *cæsura* as distinctly in music as in poetry. In neither do we mark it by a pause, unless for other reasons there happens to be a "rest" :

But how of Cawdor ? the thane of Cawdor lives.



Unless these "rests" are very pronounced I shall not indicate them. There is no object in adding unnecessary symbols to our scansion. The reader need not quarrel with me for not writing a pause or "rest" to express the infinitesimal breaks that may occur,\* or the perceptible one that certainly does when we take a new breath, for if we mark the phrase endings and indicate the balancing phrases, we give all the facts which determine breathing and phrasing. Moreover the poetry analysed here is read silently rather than recited, unobjectified poetry where we feel the breathing places only as phrase endings.

Though the *cæsura* has not necessarily anything to do with the grammatical stops, it is determined by the arrangement of the sentence. Just as the foot is a real thing, a step in our mental progress, so the phrase is a real subjective grouping of such steps, a grouping determined even more by the sense than by the rhythm. We find the *cæsura* in prose too, proving that it is not purely metrical. Mr. Abram Libsky notices that after the subject of a sentence has been stated we feel that a "phrasal section" has ended.

\* I think it likely that we do objectify the phrase divisions in poetry, something in the same way as a violinist does, by lightening off the tone at the ends. Some readers do very clearly.

The pause after the statement of the subject can be readily perceived in one's own reading. In the preceding sentence, for instance, there seems to the writer a distinct pause before "can". The fact has been verified in a number of examples by having one person read while three others noted the pauses by writing down the words after which they occurred. . . . The real subject of a proposition sometimes does not coincide with the grammatical subject. . . . In the following sentence . . . it is after "night" not after "It". "It was a dark night between two sunny days." \*

The break comes at the end of a subjective grouping of ideas or feet. It is the pivot of the sentence, the rhythmic centre of gravity where the balancing halves meet ; when we reach it the plank comes up behind and slopes to the ground in front ; after it we are in a new phase. This pivot is a rhythmical as well as a logical one, but not rhythmical alone. Thus we cannot have the *cæsura* in the middle of a foot, or still less, of a word. Guest † warns us against a curious danger. The *cæsura* in the middle of a word offends him as much as it shocks us, though in a different way He censures Milton for making this mistake in

To something ex : traordinary my thoughts.

—*Samson Agonistes*, 1382.

If we could prove that Milton wrote this ridiculous *cæsura*, this ugly glottal stop, we should have gone some way to proving a Glasgow origin for him, or at least for Samson.

Since the easiest rhythms balance in pairs and in groups of pairs, the *cæsura* tends in simple rhythms to come regularly about the middle of the line. Stated correctly, Guest's dislike is of complex rhythmic balancing. Guest ‡ gives this division :

\* *Rhythm as a distinguishing characteristic of Prose Style*, p. 25.

† *History of English Rhythms*, pp. 148-9.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 188 ; : = Guest's *cæsura*, mine comes at the junction of the As and Bs in my scansion.

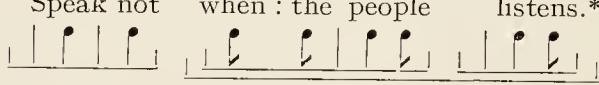
Look not thou : on beauty's charming ;



Sit thou still : when kings are arming;



Taste not when : the wine-cup glistens ;

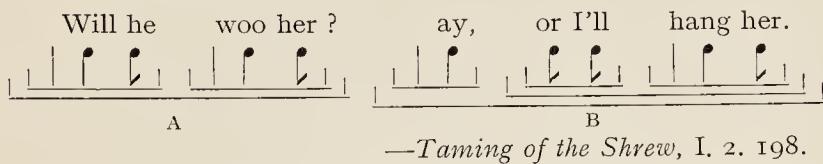


In the last couplet we should place the *cæsuras* according to the meaning, before, not after the “whens”. Apart from the *cæsuras*, the couplets differ in the way their emphasis is arranged. Unequally-weighted sections must have different lengths to balance. The more emphatic accents at the ends of the first two lines come on “beauty” and “kings”; in “charming” and “are arming” the emphasis recedes; while in the second couplet “glistens” and “listens” have the stronger accents. “Charming” and “are arming”, though not grammatically, are in poetic effect adjuncts of “beauty” and “kings”. The advice runs: Look not thou on beauty: Sit thou still when kings (are the active agents). In the second couplet neither “wine-cup” nor “people” has the emphasis. The caution is: Taste not when the cup glistens: Speak not when the people listens. Logically the listening of the people, and I think in poetic logic, the glistening of the cup matter. The changed *cæsura* brings out this contrast between the differently-weighted couplets besides making the balancing truer. Incidentally the logical is the more rhythmical phrasing.†

\* Scott, Lucy Aston's song.

† Guest, *History of English Rhythms*, p. 144, and Schipper, *History of English Versification*, p. 54, notice that in Old English the close of every sentence or member of a sentence coincided with the *caesura* or the line.

The *cæsura* may vary from a strongly-marked actual break, to an almost unrecognised subjective tickling as after “he” in the following line :



—*Taming of the Shrew*, I. 2. 198.

It may gain emphasis by coinciding with a break in the sense. After “ay” it is specially strong, “ay” being the most emphatic word in the line—we might almost say the *cæsura* is on “ay” not after it—and the rhythm changing from a falling to a rising. Or the *cæsura* may become vivid by occurring regularly in one place, especially in short lines :

Over hill, : over dale,  
Thoro' bush, : thoro' brier,  
Over park, : over pale,  
Thoro' flood, : thoro' fire.

—*Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. 1. 2.

Similarly, as Omond \* points out, the English choriambic metre seems to call for a pause between each foot, or at least to admit of one :

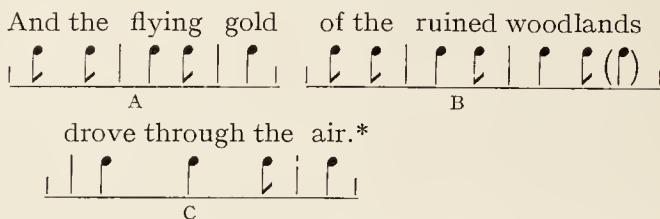
Love what | ailed thee to leave | life that was made | lovely, we  
thought | with thee |.

If we read the line in this metre, the *cæsural* feeling is strong. We need hardly add that this scanning, and indeed this style of poetic composition, is artificial and outside our

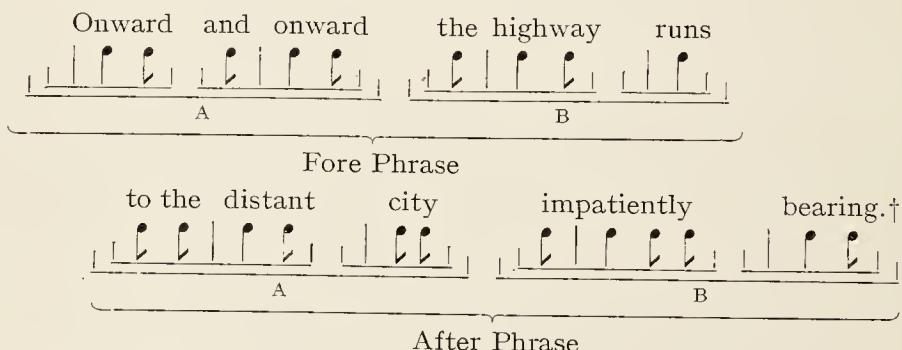
end—the best possible corroboration of the rules made by our Seivers and Schippers for the hemistich antithesis in Old English ! The Old English poets really thought in the hemistich division ; they had a simple and strong, if limited sense of rhythmic balance.

\* *A Study of Metre*, pp. 148-9.

study. English imitation of classical rhythms does not really form part of English prosody. In



the cæsural feeling after "woodlands" is very strong; the line being so long we ache for a resting-place, and sit down on it when it arrives. We feel the *cæsura* at "woodlands" so much more strongly than the break at "gold", though the break at "gold" is marked, that we should perhaps call this not a triply—(A, B, C)—balanced rhythm but an ordinary ((a + b) (B)) one. We can have no doubt about the phrasing in this lengthy line, where the *cæsura* is even more evident:



The *cæsura* after "runs" is rather a line *cæsura* than a mid-line. Though no grammatical stop occurs after either "woodlands" or "runs" there is a logical or psychological break; both sentences make two statements; one states the flying gold of the ruined woodlands and the driving of it through the air; the other the onward running of the highway and its bearing—of "Tidings" as we are told in the next line—impatiently to the distant city. Both the breaks are

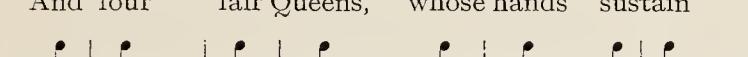
\* *Maud*.

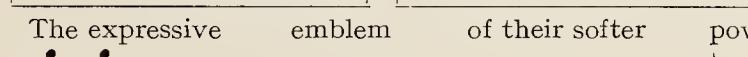
† Longfellow, *The Golden Legend*.

logical. Yet without the words the rhythms balance over the cæsural trestle; the Longfellow line, though incomplete both grammatically and logically, is a completed sentence rhythmically; nothing farther is needed to complete the rhythmic balance. On the other hand, the *cæsura* can be determined purely by logic. In writers like Pope the logical antithesis alone determines it :

Behold, four Kings in majesty revered,  

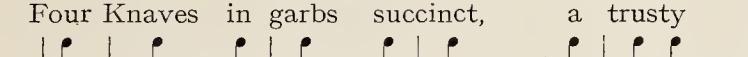

With hoary whiskers and a forked beard ;  


And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a flower,  


The expressive emblem of their softer power ;  


Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band ;  


Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hands. \*

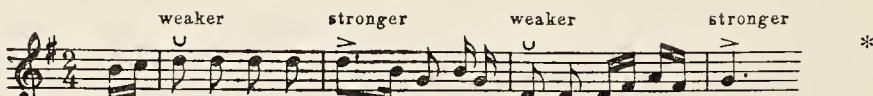


If we accept the regular iambic-foot way as the correct method of scanning, there can be nothing in the rhythm to determine the precise cæsural point; it is of necessity a purely logical one, determining the rhythm, but not in any way necessitated by the rhythm. Still, if we scan Pope by our method, the *cæsura* is a rhythmical as well as a meaningful turning-point. I wish we might dare say this is the right way of scanning Pope. Is it not the way we read him to-day, whatever he may have sounded like in his own century?

Leaving some of the more complex ways of phrasing over to the next chapter, we have now to discuss how the

\* *The Rape of the Lock*, Cant. III, 37-42.

weight of the sentence is distributed in the several phrases. Every part of a line is not equally heavy. As there may be an unequal distribution of weight within the foot, a light and a heavy syllable, so may there be within the section (the As, Bs, Cs) a light and a heavy foot, within the phrase ("fore" and "after") a light and a heavy section, within the sentence a light and a heavy phrase. This holds also of music :



This is from an incompletely rhythmized score. To avoid "lugging" in more music than necessary, I have marked our old tune on p. 93 :  $\text{v}$  indicates the less strong accent,  $>$  the stronger. The lowest row of symbols marks the emphasis within the sections, the row above, the emphasis within the phrases, and the top row, the relative strength of the two sentence accents. This is the typical musical balance, though by no means the only one. It is the simplest balance in English poetry; English poetry tends to fall into it, especially with rhyme. But Old English poetry, and possibly all poetry that depends for rhythmic emphasis on alliteration, has an entirely different balance. We know that alliteration in Old English represented a real emphasis. We know it, partly because we *feel* it so, and partly from the "rules" modern scholars have deduced from the old poetry. The most important word and syllable always bore the alliteration, rhetoric stress, syntactical value, and etymological pronunciation, determining the emphasis.<sup>†</sup> The alliteration gilded an emphasis already there,<sup>‡</sup> being natural and not an artificial decoration. Now the Old English line was divided into two sections or hemistichs, each of which had two

\* Stewart Macpherson, *Form in Music*, p. 7. See also Prout, *Musical Form*, p. 15, and McEwen, *The Thought in Music*, p. 30.

† *History of English Versification*, pp. 50-3.

‡ Sweet, *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, Introduction, p. lxxxvii.

accents. When there were only two alliterating words in the line, one of them must, and both might, occur in the first hemistich; if one alliterative came in the second hemistich it must be on the first of the accented words. When there were three alliteratives in the line, two must occur on the accented syllables of the first hemistich. From this alone we can deduce a falling phrase and section emphasis, while we know that the trochaic and dactyllic feet have a big majority over the iambic and anapaestic. It is interesting that very small children still find the trochaic the easier rhythm, though older children and grown-ups feel the iambic the more natural.\* Teachers say that young children learn trochaic verse much more easily than iambic. Many nursery rhymes are in that metre. I wonder if very small children tend to have falling phrase emphasis too. Ordinarily, we should ask, "Where is Mary?" the emphasis being on "Mary". I think children when very eager for the answer, would (I know of one who always did) put the question, "Mary, where is?" the emotional emphasis coming first. It is not accidental that the iambic mentality relies on rhyme for the delimiting, emphasising factor, the trochaic on alliteration. It is also significant that while in Old English the more regular and fuller alliteration comes in the first half of the line, the change to the iambic method of Middle English was preceded by a shifting of the alliterative stress to the latter part of the line, or at least by a licence allowing it.† The change of mentality from the Old English with its trochaic-like to the Middle English with its iambic forms of verse is a very curious one, all the more curious for being paralleled in the growth of the child. We do not know the reason for it, and perhaps the historical view that French influences changed the rhythm is only partially true, and only true when it means that the Romance influence

\* *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XII, pp. 536-7, Miss Squire, "A Genetic Study of Rhythm".

† Schipper, *History of English Versification*, pp. 48-53.

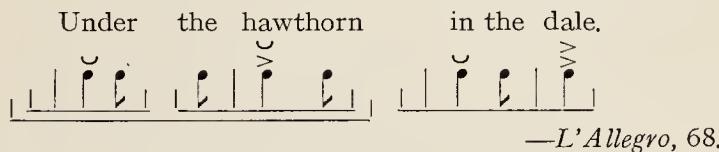
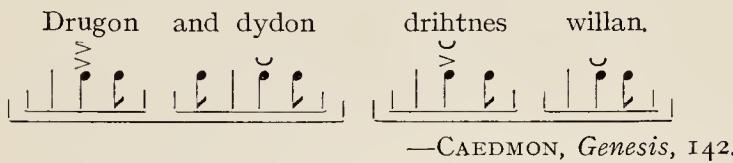
went deeper than mere forms and fashions and changed the temperament and mental outlook of the English—that the difference results not because Frenchmen ruled in our courts, and lived in our castles, and imposed their language on us for a time, but because we married them. The alliterative revival of the Middle Ages came from the north—the resurgence of the suppressed Saxon, perhaps ! And indeed, this Saxon has never died ; he still keeps coming out at the corners. Thomas Campion, John Milton, S. T. Coleridge all know how to balance a trochaic suggestion against the gravity of rhyme, even using quasi-metrical alliteration to help this, as we may see in *Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow*, itself one, or in another poem :

*Parrots can so learn to prate, our speech by pieces gleaning.*

The falling phrase and section emphasis is the prominent ingredient of the sensation we get from Old English poetry ; it is what more than anything else makes it *feel* different from modern poetry, and the rhythmic attitude is so different that some readers fail to grasp the strange balance and so miss the music. Once we do grasp it, the Old English rhythms can be both vigorous and lovely. The accents in the *Battle of Maldon* sound in stirring clangour ; they ring with the din of fighting. The melody of *Beowulf* can be stately, even gracious ; when the queen goes round the banquet hall with the wine-cup, it treads a noble measure. At its fiercest the Old English rhythm makes a virile music that gets into one's blood as the sound of bag-pipe music gets into the Highlander's. We must not call it uncouth because it sounds uproarious in a drawing-room. Saintsbury \* calls it a “singing in the ears, rather than a tune.” It is a tingling in the marrow that by comparison makes the soothing syrupinesses of poets like Swinburne feel like unhealthy narcotics. To illustrate the difference between the Old English “dirling” and the modern lulling music,

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. I, p. 73.

we cannot do better than compare instances of both given by Guest \* as examples of the same rhythm, and see how their phrase and section emphasis differ vitally :



Do not let us deprive him of the parallel by refusing to accent "in" a little. We do not feel the accent stronger on "dale" than on "hawthorn" out of its rhymed context.

Beorht and geblaedfast buendra leas.



Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.



(again allowing Guest his way about the foot accentuation). If we scan the line from *Lear* correctly we have still the same contrast :

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.



Similarly the metre of "My heart's in the highlands" has nothing to do with

Bugon þa to bence | blaed-agende,  
fylle gefaegon | . Fagere geþaegon.  
Medofull manig | magas þara.

—*Beowulf*, 1013-15.

\* *History of English Rhythms*, pp. 193-4.

as Schipper \* supposes. It is interesting, too, that in Saintsbury's quotations from the alliterative romance revival we should find the same tendency to falling emphasis, while in his examples from rhyming romances of about the same time, the emphasis is rising. The older balance in the alliterative poetry is so strong that it sometimes almost obliterates the rhyme :

I compast hem a kynde craft | and kende hit hem derne  
 And armed hit in myn ordenaunce | oddly dere ;  
 And dyght drwry therinner | doole alther-swettest,  
 And the play of paramores | I portrayed myselven. †

Contrast it with :

Tyll hyt fell | on a day  
 He mette Elene | that may  
 Wythinne the Castell tour.  
 To hym sche | gan to say  
 Syr Knyght, thou | art fals of fay  
 (or it might be " fals of fay ")  
 Agens the King Arthour. ‡

I think we are right in allowing the rhyme to force the heaviest accent of the line, perhaps of the stanza, on to the last syllable of " Arthour ". This sounds the most vivid note in the music. In some of Saintsbury's other samples we feel the contrasting pull of rhyme and alliteration :

" Quer-fore ! " qwod the freke, and freshly he askes  
 Ferde lest he hade fayled on fourme of his castes.  
 Bot the burde hym blessed and bi this skyl sayde, §

\* *History of English Versification*, pp. 120-4.

† *History of English Prosody*, Vol. I, p. 104. I put | = *cæsura*.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

or in *L'Allegro* or the *Ancient Mariner*, as we already said. Here the pull is so even that we cannot be sure whether "freschly" or "askes", "fourme" or "castes" should have the heavier emphasis; but we feel a leaning rather towards the alliteration. It seems to me that much of the mystery of the music of English poetry, the flexibility of its rhythm, depends on its capacity for keeping the phrase and section emphasis continually on the move. In

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote

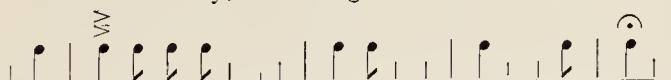


The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,



the falling section emphasis on “The droghte of Marche” gives a certain mobility, ease, aliveness to the line; it makes all the difference between a wooden and a flesh and blood couplet.\*

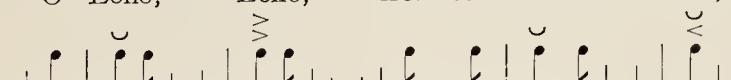
O Melancholy, linger here awhile!



O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!



Q. Echo. Echo. from some sombre isle,

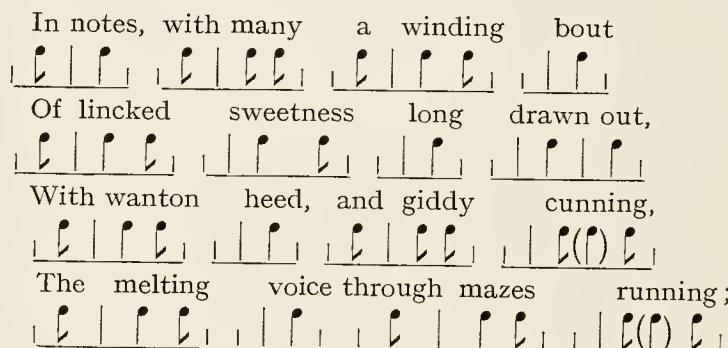


Unknown Lethean sigh to us— O sigh !



\* Is this flexibility a differentiating characteristic of English poetry? The play of the Saxon and the Frank? I do not pretend to a knowledge of the prosody of other tongues, but I seem to remember French hexameters whose dullness was metrical also, owing—could it have been?—to the lack of something corresponding to this mobile distribution of the weight. But the memory is perhaps a Satanic snare.

Starting with a heavy accent, the force tails away in the first line with accents of diminishing stress on "linger", "here", and "awhile", though "awhile" having the greatest length and rhyming, has more sense of emphasis than even "linger". In the first section of the second line the stronger pulse comes on the second "music" partly, probably, because it is a trochee without the gradient of a light syllable. This may also account for the first "sigh" stealing the stronger stress from the second, which would be part of a weak rhyme in any case. In



the two forces, a falling alliterative-enducing and a rhyming, balance each other. It is difficult to say whether "mazes" or "running", "giddy" or "cunning", "long" or "out", "lincked" or "sweetness", etc., is the more emphatic. The emphasis feels somehow level. But perhaps Campion is the greatest master of changing balance ; he uses it when unhampered by rhyme, to control the cadence :

Follow, follow,  
 Though with mischief  
 Armed, like whirlwind  
 Now she flies thee ;

↗ { Time can conquer  
 ↘ { Love's unkindness ;  
 ↗ { Love can alter  
 ↘ { Time's disgraces :  
 ↗ { Till death faint not  
 ↘ { Then, but follow.  
  
 ↘ { Could I catch that  
 ↗ { Nimble traitor  
 ↗ { Scornful Laura,  
 ↗ { Swift-foot Laura,  
 ↗ { Soon then would I  
 ↗ { Seek avengement.  
 ↗ { What's th'avengement ?  
 ↗ { Ev'n submissly  
 ↗ { Prostrate then to  
 ↗ { Beg for mercy.

It seems clumsy to follow a thing of such winning charm with a heavy prose explanation, but prosody at its best is a blasphemous art wearing its shoes in the sanctuary. The poem divides into two equal stanzas, the *poem* emphasis being rising (↗ >). Each stanza groups itself into five couplets, the emphasis being mostly falling with enough rising to give a sense of mobility. But the shifting of the emphasis within the line more than anything else gives the characteristic rhythmic charm. Our farther grouping of each stanza into four is perhaps a little artificial. The mobility of the rhythm, the changing centre of gravity,

depends chiefly on the shifting couplet accent. It starts on the last foot in the couplet, "mischief", then goes to the second, "whirlwind", then to the first in "Time" and "Love", then the second syllable of the first foot on "death". This most unexpected inversion forces the cadence and gives us the sensation of a stanza close, for we must remember that in the original text the poem is written without a stanza break. In the second stanza the couplet emphasis moves from the second foot on "catch" to the first on "scornful", to the last on "avengement", to the first on "What's"; then for the first time it comes on the third foot on "Beg". This new position of the emphasis again helps the cadence. "Beg" seems to focus the whole weight of the poem. It is the most emphatic word in its couplet, its stanza, and indeed, in the poem, and derives part of this prominence from being the one foot that has not yet borne the weight. It is the pistil of the flower. Milton knows how to do this sort of thing too, although he is a little stiffer, not quite so free. We might write his couplets out in half lines for comparison :

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">u</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td></tr> </table> <p>Haste thee nymph, and Bring with thee Jest and youthful Jollity,</p>	u	v	v				Emphasis in these lines pretty equal.
u	v	v					
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">u</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td></tr> </table> <p>Quips and cranks, and Wanton wiles, Nods, and becks and Wreathed smiles,</p>	u	v	v				
u	v	v					
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td></tr> </table> <p>Such as hang on Hebe's cheek, and Love to live in Dimple sleek.</p>	v	v	v				
v	v	v					
<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td><td style="padding: 0 10px;">v</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td><td style="padding: 0 10px;"> </td></tr> </table> <p>Time and Love, Death and Beg.</p>	v	v	v				
v	v	v					

Or to take an example in a more rising metre :

But come thou Goddess  
 Fair and free,  
 In Heaven ycleapt  
 Euphrosyne,  
 And by men, heart-  
 Easing mirth,  
 Whom lovely Venus,  
 At a birth  
 With two sister      } Perhaps it should be  
 Graces more      }      "Graces more"  
 To Ivy-crowned      } and  
 Bacchus bore.      }      "Bacchus bore."

It is interesting, that where a rhyme comes on a weak syllable the answering rhyme usually has a comparatively weak accent: thus "Euphrosyne" and "free", "jollity" and "thee". There is no exception to this in *L'Allegro* and only two in *Il Penseroso*. The "ion" of "contemplation" is evidently strong enough to balance "fiery-wheeled throne" of line 54. In

That at her flowry work doth sing,  
 And the Waters murmuring

perhaps the "ing" is exaggerated for onomatopoeic effect. Other possible exceptions occur in the last dozen lines, but the probability is on the right side.

## CHAPTER V.

### EXAMPLES OF RESULTING PROSODY.

Now to the eating of our pudding. So far we have dealt with general and fundamental principles, and have illustrated only the structure of feet and the balance of simple phrases. We have yet to illustrate more complex phrase groupings, to analyse the rhythmic structure of verse sentences, and to see how unlike phrases balance one another, and, if possible, why. The length of the balancing phrases is immaterial, though any one phrase will not necessarily balance any other ; there must be some, so far undiscovered, principle of appropriateness. This we shall illustrate, though incidentally, in the analysis of one or two poems. I refrain from attempting to unify impressions and attain to underlying principles in this chapter, because my research is not detailed enough to justify general conclusions. Still, it is difficult to refrain from generalising about the prosody of the poets whose works I analyse, and perhaps I ought to say that such generalisations are on a wide reading of the poets, but not on a wide research. I have chosen Wordsworth, Milton and Shakespeare for several reasons. The rhythms of Wordsworth's poetry and of *Samson Agonistes* are not even yet appreciated as they deserve, and partly because orthodox prosody stands in their light. I shall try to show that blank verse, so far from being sufficiently iambic to justify the description "unrhymed iambic pentameter" is written on an entirely different plan.

That Saintsbury \* should condemn Wordsworth's pro-

\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. III, pp. 71-4.  
(110)

sody is significant. We cannot measure it by the Saintsbury-foot-rule, which marks all *shorts* equally short and all *longs* equally long. "Why," says he, "should

any human being avail himself of *inharmonious* numbers to inform us that

"on the roof  
Of an itinerant vehicle I sate"

or that

"my inner judgment  
Not seldom differed from my taste in books."

He concludes "in fact the iamb is almost as much Wordsworth's sole foot as it is Pope's." Here "sole" has two meanings used simultaneously and applying diversely one to Pope alone, the other to Wordsworth alone. The iamb is Pope's sole foot because he uses no other, Wordsworth's because it is the only foot of Wordsworth's that meets with Saintsbury's approval. The others get "ꝝ——" every time. Browning's verse is rhythmical because all his lines go safely through the Saintsbury sieve. Wordsworth has a stiff collection of stones of weird shapes which refuse to percolate, shake them how you will. True, Wordsworth's quantities are not easily reduced to even roughly close musical symbols; and when we put his verses into *bars*, these sometimes make a very irregular pattern. As we already said, intellect, meaning, or significance not solely emotional, tend to disturb regular rhythm. If any poet ever meant what he said exactly as he says it, he is Wordsworth. His literal faithfulness to truth, and the way he uses words with their full significance, often with more significance than they customarily bear, even the correctness of his grammar (unusually correct for a poet), show that he chooses and arranges his words more for their intrinsic meaning than for how they sound. This everyone feels. It does not follow that Wordsworth's rhythms are *inharmonious*. We cannot separate the rhythm of the words from the rhythm of the mental

process behind them. Thus a poet may write rhythmically through thinking rhythmically, although he is aware of his rhythm only on the "fringe" of his consciousness; the reader, likewise, may come under the spell of this rhythm and feel its power at every word although his attention is focussed on the meaning. As we now recognise, Wordsworth's preoccupation with his matter is easily over-exaggerated. Admittedly Wordsworth was an artist; he was even a prosodian. Saintsbury, though he says Wordsworth is barren of prosodic inspiration, gives him credit for sound prosodic craftsmanship. We should scan the first example quoted in despite thus:



None of the bars are isochronous; the phrase balance is not regular; we cannot say "a" and "b" link themselves together, and are balanced by "c" and "d". Yet we do have a balanced sensation, though not the easy balance of a nursery rhyme or lullaby. The repetition of the  $\text{f} \text{f} \text{f}$  part of the "b" foot as a foot by itself helps to make the rhythm coherent, repetition being a factor in rhythm. Here too, is unity in variety! The sentence balances itself in this way: "a" opens the rhythm and glides into "b", which leads us on rather because we expect something than because we get something; "vehicle" emphasises the new rhythm and partially satisfies our craving for stability, which is finally attained by the iamb. We test the state of our sensation of stability or balance or poise, by stopping after each section in turn. The rhythm calls for something more after every foot; we cannot stop till we finish on the iamb. "b" and "c" are closer together than "a" and "b"; "a" seems to throw out a line that comes to rest only with "d", "d" being a close for either "a" alone or "b" + "c".

alone. In other words, we miss the cæsural sensation ; here are not two halves balancing, or three thirds, but rather something like four unstable ends pulled square by the pinning of the last corner. This sort of balance is not original to Wordsworth ; as far as I have gone, it is comparatively usual among the more complex types of balance. We cannot justly call it arhythmic, though the rhythm may be too subtle for us to grasp. The second offending sentence we may scan so :

My inner judgment

Not seldom differed from my taste in books.

This is a triply-balanced sentence ; each section is formed from three particles : (1) “  $\text{f} \text{f}$  ” or in the last syllable “  $\text{f}$  ”, (2)  $\text{f} \text{f}$ , and (3)  $\text{f} \text{f}$ , wonderfully woven into different patterns. It is a mosaic of three colours. The “  $\text{f} \text{f}$  ” particle, which gives character to the passage, being the body of one phrase, the tail of another and the head of the third, escapes Saintsbury, since he scans the first portion of “inner” or “differed” or “from my” long (f). Not much wonder he thinks the rhythm dull. This is not one of Wordsworth’s highest flights of genius ; he states a prose fact; for even in poetry we must have bread on which to put the jam. But it is characteristic of his rhythms if only in that it makes its gentle effect without fuss or bombast. The structure of the rhythm is subtle and quiet. Wordsworth’s music makes the music of other poets seem noisy and blatant. Saintsbury calls this sort of prosody insignificant and flat. We have shown the significance of these rhythms. Their music is quiet rather than flat. It is not as if poetry ought to go off with a pop, or that we can put poetry to our ear like a watch, and condemn the balance because the movement is

irregular. As an example of Wordsworth's lyric rhythm, let us scan *The Small Celandine*. Since his punctuation was very careful, and meant to mark metrical as well as grammatical divisions, I have used it to divide the rhythmic groupings with very few additions of my own.\*

(1) There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,



That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;



And, the first moment, that the sun may shine,



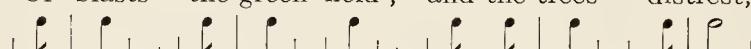
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!



(2) When hailstones, have been falling, swarm on swarm,



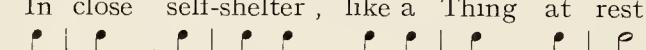
Or blasts the green field, and the trees distrest,



Oft have I seen it, muffled up from harm,



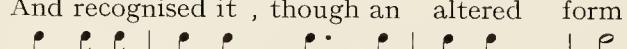
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.



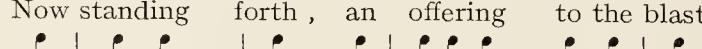
(3) But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed,



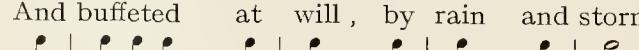
And recognised it, though an altered form,



Now standing forth, an offering to the blast,



And buffeted at will, by rain and storm.



\* These are :

Verse (1) After *moment*.

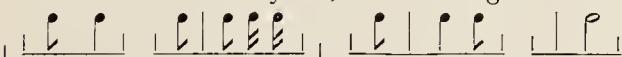
.. (2) .. *hailstones, field, seen it.*

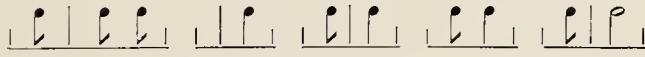
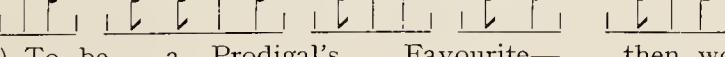
.. (3) .. *passed, forth, will.*

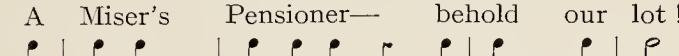
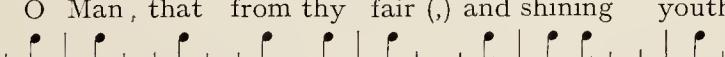
.. (4) .. *courage.*

.. (5) .. *itself.*

.. (6) .. *fair, youth, things.*

(4) I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice ,  
  
 "It doth not love the shower , nor seek the cold :  
  
 This neither is its courage , nor its choice ,  
  
 But its necessity , in being old .  


(5) The sunshine may not cheer it , nor the dew ;  
  
 It cannot help itself , in its decay ;  
  
 Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."  
  
 And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey .  


(6) To be a Prodigal's Favourite— then, worse truth,  
  
 A Miser's Pensioner— behold our lot !  
  
 O Man, that from thy fair (,) and shining youth,  
  
 Age might but take the things, Youth needed not !  


Part of the charm lies in the feminine phrase endings which sound very lovely contrasting with the masculine : " flower " contrasting with " Celandine " of neuter gender, " shrinks ", " more ", " rain ", and " moment " with " shine ", " himself ", " again ". In the second verse " falling " contrasts with " swarm ", " field ", " disturb ", " seen it " with " harm ", and " shelter " with " rest ". In the third " lately " and " recognised it " with " day ", " form ", etc. ! In the fourth

“shower” and in the fifth “sunshine” and “cheer it”, “members” and “withered”! Each one comes echoing more than in rhythm: “falling”, “flower”, “shower”, or “seen it”, “recognised it”, “cheer it”, or “shelter”, “lately”, “moment”, “members” with their *ms* and *ts* and *ls*. The phrasing is lovely too. In the first verse a four-phrase rhythm, or if we take “and” as a self-sufficient entity, then five, balances against a five, no two phrases being alike. “And” does not, strictly speaking, belong to “the first moment”; it is almost like a note struck and held on while the others come in, till “’tis out again”. Wordsworth separates it off by a comma to mark its difference from the “and” of “cold and rain”. He often uses “and” with this meaning and phrasing. In verse (2) a four-phrase sentence balances a four-phrase one, or if we add a comma after “hailstones” then a five-phrase rhythm. Again no two phrases are alike save the  $\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f}$  of the cadences; but there are echoes of the rhythm of the first verse.

Verse (2) :

And the trees distrest }  
 Like a thing at rest, } are similar to “that the sun may  
 shine”.

Oft have I seen it  
 $\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f}$

is a mixture of

Bright as the sun himself,  
 $\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f}$

and

And, the first moment.

$\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f}$

When hailstones, have been falling

$\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f}$

is a variation of

That shrinks, like many more.

$\mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{f} | \mathfrak{f}$

In Verse (3), we have a five-phrase sentence answered by a four. Three of the phrases are similar,

<p>                          I passed</p> <p>                          Now standing forth</p> <p>                          by rain and storm</p> <p>                          And recognised it,</p>	<p>                          each a variation of the double iambic phrase of verse (1),</p> <p>                          from cold and rain</p> <p>                          or                   'tis out again.</p>

have an obvious affinity, the same material differently arranged. The other phrases are new.

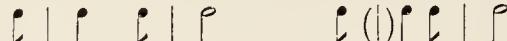
When hailstones

The fourth verse has a four, or if we break at "said", a five-phrase rhythm balanced by a three or four according to whether we break at "necessity" or not.

With inly-muttered voice,  
P | P P | P | P | P  
This neither is its courage  
P | P P | P | P | P  
But its necessity,  
P | P P | P P P | P

continue the variation of the material used in the previous stanza.

Nor seek the cold,      in being old



are the double iambic cadence again. The pendant rhythm of

nor its choice,



we had before in "swarm on swarm", and are to hear twice again in the next verse, "changed of hue" and "nor the dew".

In the fifth verse the first foot echoes "and lately";

may not cheer it



echoes

have been falling;



in fact if the second syllable of "hailstones" were short this line would echo that identically in phrasing and rhythm.

It cannot help itself



is similar to

the lesser Celandine.



Stiff in its members



is like

and, the first moment,



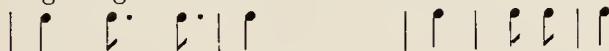
which it links up with

And, in my spleen



of the next verse. "In its decay" is the double iamb, and "I smiled that it was grey" a triple iamb as far as quantity goes. This is a five-phrase rhythm answered by a five-phrase one, if we count "And" by itself. The first two lines of the sixth and last verse form a four-phrased rhythm. In the last two lines Wordsworth has no punctuation after "man", which presumably means that they should be read without break. Even so, we are conscious of *cæsuras* after "fair", "Youth" and "take"; "the things" feels like an iambic buffer between the choriambic feet of

"Age might but take" and "Youth needed not",



which echo

That from thy fair.



Characteristic of this poem, and I think of Wordsworth in general, is the submersion of the feet in the phrase; the joints are softly and cunningly contrived so that we hardly hear them.

To be a Prodigal's Favourite



divided into feet, seems an exaggeration only one degree less artificial than the scansion

To be a Prod - igal's Fa - vorite.



The whole movement is muted. We notice that Wordsworth's choriambic feet lack the vigour of those in *Samson Agonistes*, where some of the |p p p| p rhythms make a harsh and martial noise; Wordsworth's choriamb is softened. In *The Small Celandine* they all join in the same place:

O man, that from thy fair and shining Youth,



Age might but take the things, Youth needed not!



The choriamb is a monosyllable + an anapæst ; “that”, like the “and” in other verses, is not really part of the thought, “from thy fair”; it stands apart; “Age” and “Youth” equally stand off a little from the rest of their foot. The dissimilarities in accents and quantities weaken Wordsworth’s choriams; “that” of the first choriamb though long has no accent, in the last, “needed”, with both syllables short has an accent on the first, while the short syllables of the middle choriamb are very deliberate :

Age might but take.



The soft vowel and consonant music, too, has its share in making the movement easier, and since we are generalising, we may as well notice another characteristic. Every word is significant—“O man, that from thy fair and shining youth Age might but take the things Youth needed not!”—there is less difference between the unaccented and accented syllables than usual in poetry, certainly less difference than in Milton. The short syllables are full toned; our tendency to lose the feet in the phrase means that the foot accentuations in Wordsworth’s poetry are light :

With visible motion, her diurnal round.\*

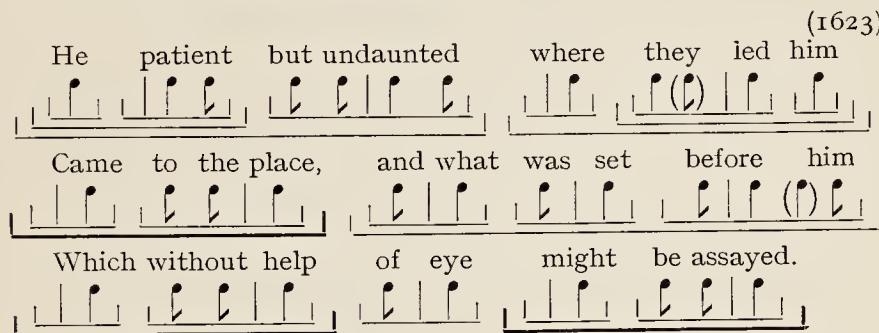


The voice hardly strengthens on “visible” or “round”. It swells out on “motion” and “diurnal”, which rise out of the misty level of the line like the backs of mountains above the clouds. And the level is a low one, very quiet; where Wordsworth’s melody changes from flute song to thunder, it is not louder; he does not raise his voice, only speaks from a more abysmal depth. All these minute characteristics count in our reading; by such subtle and unostentatious means he gives to those who hear his music, the characteristic quiet movement they love. Possibly it is this

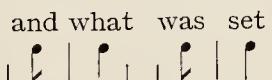
\* *Prelude*, I, 460.

softening of the rhythm, this wearing away of the sharp edges that makes him seem dull to those incomprehensible, uncomprehending people who think it dull. They prefer rocks naked, not moss-grown and lichen-patterned.

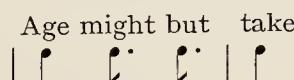
Very different is the rhythm of *Samson Agonistes*. Take some of the choriamb \* from that poem:



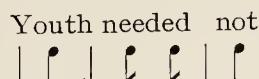
The feet are clearly felt :



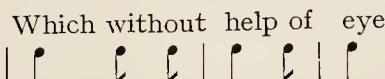
—two separate iambs quite different from the soft double iambic effect of *The Small Celandine* cadence! We have only to compare



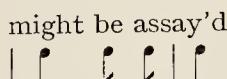
and



with



and



\* Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, Vol. II, pp. 252-3, points out how prevalent this foot is in *Samson Agonistes*, and, indeed, Milton's fondness for it generally.

to see how vivid is the difference between the accented and unaccented, the long and the short syllables in Milton as compared with Wordsworth. We need not "boost" the comparison. It will make itself felt as we proceed. In *Samson* once a foot of distinctive character appears, it tends to reproduce itself. We have had no choriamb for a while before these lines, but a bevy of them rise once this is started :

(1640)

Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed

I have performed, as reason was, obeying,

Not without wonder or delight beheld.

Now of my own accord. Etc.

(1645)

As with amaze shall strike all who behold.

(1647)

As with the force.

Ten lines farther on, another covey is started. Then at line 1695—

but as an Eagle



—another. If we turn back to about line 170 we find a long run of them and many phrases enclosing, or in some sort echoing their rhythm :

let us draw nigh,

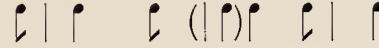
Counsel or Consolation,

Now of my own experience,

Bear in their Superscription,



Yet that which was the worst,



Who like a foolish Pilot,



etc.

Sometimes an iambic echo of the latter half of the foot follows it :

and for a word, a tear,

(200)



How could I once look up,

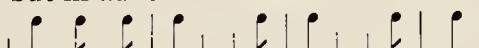
(197)



or two iambs :

but in adverse withdraw their head.

(191)



From line 1485 to 1503 they crowd thickly, especially at the beginning of the lines. About line 90 we see the same thing happening with another rhythm, which echoes with subtle variations, as in Wordsworth's poetry :

Since light so necessary is to life.



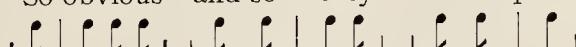
Part of the originating rhythm is suggested almost at once—

That light is in the Soul.



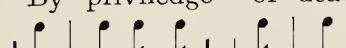
At line 95 we have

So obvious and so easy to be quench't.



By privilege of death

(104)



is echoed exactly in

the miseries of life, (107)



and again by a sort of inversion in

Life in captivity, (108)



and then in

my enemies who came. (112)



At line 130 we have

And weaponless himself,



Made Arms ridiculous, useless the forgery.



So again at line 652 :

Many are the sayings of the wise



In ancient and in modern books enrolled ;



Extolling Patience as the truest fortitude ;



And to the bearing well of all calamities.



From line 660,

But with the afflicted in his pangs,



comes an echo in

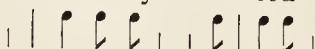
Some source of consolation.

(664)

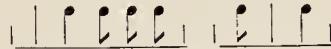


Solemnly elected

(678)



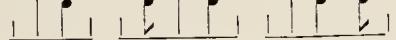
is partially mirrored in the next line,

eminently adorned.  


In line 1368 the slight variation in the second phrase is a lovely one :

Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.  

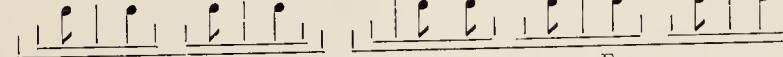

The original is echoed in line 1381 :

Be of good courage.  


But perhaps the most beautiful of all the varying echoes of the poem come in that wonderfully chastened transformation of the choriamb where the rhythm plays in and out of the choriambic suggestion, and the echoes whisper and peal and twine, in these lines :

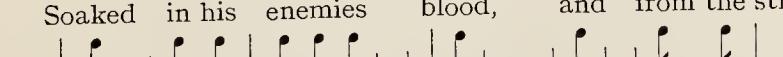
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail (1720)  
  
 A B

Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
  
 C D

Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,  
  
 E F

And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
  
 G H

Let us go find the body where it lies  
  
 I J

Soaked in his enemies blood, and from the stream  
  
 K L



EXAMPLES OF RESULTING PROSODY 127

And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour, and adventures high:  
The Virgins also shall on feastful days  
Visit his Tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

A, B and C form one rhythmic group; D, E and F form another; G and H another. Combined (GH) balances (ABCDEF) and completes the rhythmic sentence. I, J and K group. L, M and N group. O and P balance. Q and R balance. S, T and U group. V, W, X and Y group. 1 and 2 balance. 3 is perhaps alone or with 4. 4 and 5 balance. 6 and 7, and 8 and 9 balance. 10 and 11 balance. 12 and 13 balance. 14 and 15 balance. 16, 17 and 18 group. 19, 20 and 21 group. 22 and 23 balance.

In the first "sentence" we notice the contrasting rhythms of

no weakness, no contempt,

and

Dispraise, or blame,

and the reflected rhythm of the three phrases beginning with "nothing". The apparently simple rhythmic pattern of the last of these is not simply a trochee and two iambs, but a trochee and iamb forming a choriamb with a cadence iamb to balance, not the same sort of choriamb as "What your

commands imposed", which is a real undivided choriamb (or practically so) followed by a separate iamb. The choriamb here, which is only half choriambic, melts into the iamb, the relation and separation being emphasised by the rhyme (it is more than assonance) "here" and "tears", just as "weakness" and "contempt", "dispraise", "blame" and "fair" emphasise the separation and junction of the rhythmic units, by assonance.

Meaning tends to have the largest say in how the phrase is divided, but there is such a thing as a rhythmic balance apart from, perhaps against the meaning. We see this in "end-stopped", or as Saintsbury calls them, "self-moulded" lines :



forms two complete finished rhythms whatever the meaning of the words forming them, as we realise if we compare them with this unfinished rhythm :



After none of these phrases do we feel a sense of balance ; the rhythm does not feel complete till we add  $\text{I} \mid \text{I} \text{I} \mid \text{I} \cdot \ddot{\text{I}}$ . The first phrase  $\text{I} \mid \text{I} \text{I} \mid \text{I}$  repeated thrice, or perhaps twice, could give us a completed rhythm, though not very easily ; but followed by one so different as  $\text{I} \mid \text{I} \text{I} \mid \text{I}$  it needs reconciliation, or perhaps we should rather say

\* *I.e.* Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts.

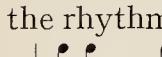
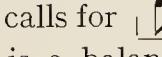
† *I.e.* and from the stream  
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off.

‡ The clotted gore.

resolution of some sort. When this second phrase——is repeated, our uneasiness increases still farther.

Wash off the clotted gore.



—a cross between the two rhythms—turns the balance at last. “Wash off” is the important foot in the change of the rhythm from an expectant, pushing, forward motion, to a finishing, completing one, and we stress “wash” especially. It is difficult to explain just why we feel impelled to stress “wash” particularly, and why this phrase should balance the rhythm.  calls for  to balance it;  is a balanced rhythm in itself. The final phrase balances the first phrase or the second equally well—

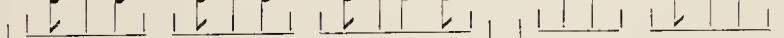


or



though perhaps neither of these explanations is sufficient. In

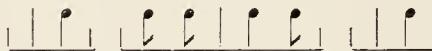
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends



we feel the rhythmic pattern so strongly as to have a decided cæsural feeling after the first “all”, in spite of the sense. To discover the reason for this again is difficult, unless it results from the many iambs—four of them in the previous line, then two in this one. The rule about having the *cæsura* in the middle of the line, here or one or two syllables farther on, was ratified during the fashion of the regular iambic-patterned verse. After “kindred” another *cæsura* divides the line against the sense; it changes the meaning from “I will send for all my kindred and friends to fetch him,” into

“ I will send for all my kindred,” then a fresh start “ all my friends to fetch him hence.” The three phrases (V, W and X) balance within themselves, and are linked together and related by the  $\underline{\underline{\underline{\text{I}} \text{I} \text{I} \text{I}}}$  rhythm in the first and last, and the variation of it in the middle one. The rhythm of

Home to his Fathers house



is varied in

there will I build him.



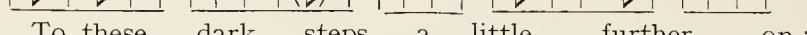
The break at “ shade ”—an end-stopped line—is felt strongly in spite of the grammatical and psychological continuity.

And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour and adventures high :

makes a couplet rhythm. “ Only bewailing ” has, in a sense, an end-stopped feeling, though very much slighter than at “ shade ” or “ hearts ”, since it is at the end of the unbalanced and not the balancing phrase. We always feel the line *cæsura* strongly in a couplet rhythm even at the first line where the balance is not complete, because there the first phrase is balanced by the second.

Noticeable in *Samson Agonistes* are the short heavy feet. It opens :

A little onward lend thy guiding hand



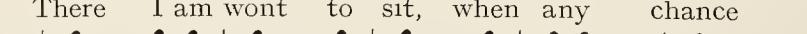
To these dark steps, a little further on ;



For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade,

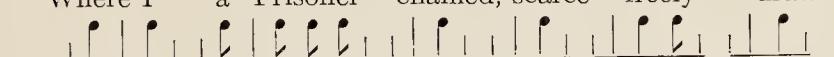
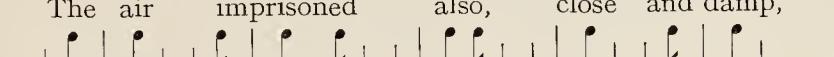
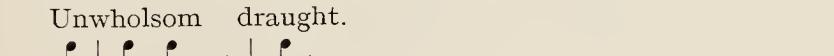


There I am wont to sit, when any chance

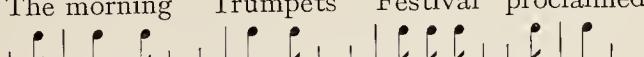
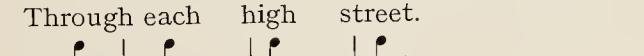


Relieves me from my task of servile toyl,

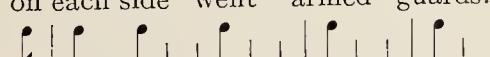


Daily in the common Prison else enjoyned me,  
  
 Where I a Prisoner chained, scarce freely draw  
  
 The air imprisoned also, close and damp,  
  
 Unwholsom draught.  


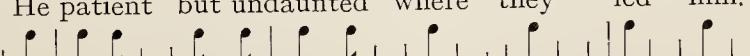
The sound of the words, in the first instance, suggests the dull, slow, movement—the halting of the *ds* and *nds* in the first line, of the *n* before the *w* of “onward”, of the guttural ending of “guiding” before the *h* of “hand”, the break of “dark” before “steps”, which itself has shut-off consonants. Then again, “bank hath”, and at the end of our quotation, “damp unwholsom draught”! These suggest to us a blind man’s tread, and we read this into the rhythm. So again in line 1598 the step is short and accented, though with a different feeling :

The morning Trumpets Festival proclaimed  
  
 Through each high street.  


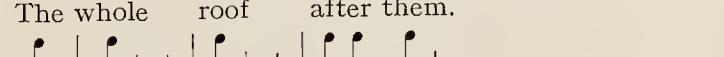
or line 1617 :

on each side went armed guards.  


or 1623 :

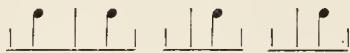
He patient but undaunted where they led him.  


1650 :

He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew  
  
 The whole roof after them.  


1709:

Nor much more cause



(due again to difficulty in saying the words).

1715:

Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them



Find courage.

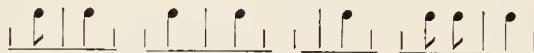


1752:

Whence Gaza mourns



And all that band them to resist.

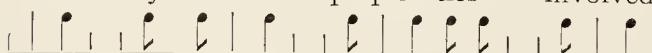
As noticeable are the long, light feet in *Samson Agonistes*:

Regardless of his glories diminution;

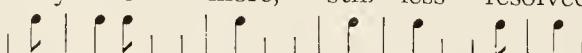
(303)



Till by their own perplexities involved



They ravel more, still less resolved,



But never find self satisfying solution.



As if they would confine the interminable.



or



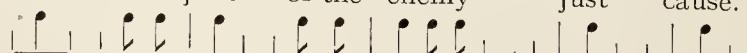
314:

For with his own Laws, he can best dispense.



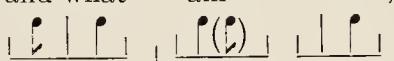
316:

Nor in respect of the enemy just cause.

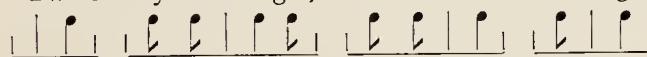
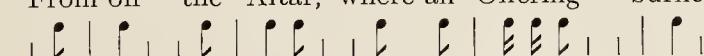


These are by no means characteristic of *Samson* alone; *Paradise Lost* has plenty of them, but used in this way, they are, I think, characteristic of Milton.

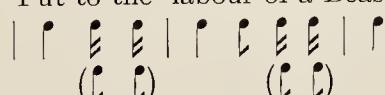
Where the mood changes, the rhythm tends to change. At line 22 after the slow, blind, tread of the opening rhythm,

Times past, what once I was,  
  
 and what am now,  


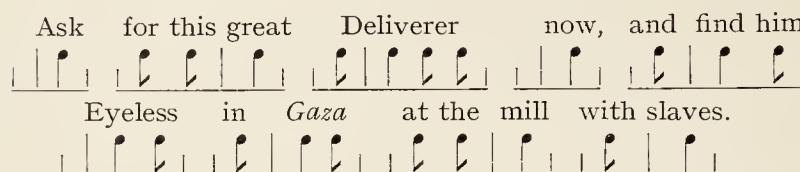
Samson raises his voice and the emotion makes the line trip, as emotion frequently does in Milton :

O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold  
  
 Twice by an Angel, who at last in sight  
  
 Of both my Parents all in flames ascended  
  
 From off the Altar, where an Offering burned,  
  
 As in a fiery column charioting  
  
 His Godlike presence.  

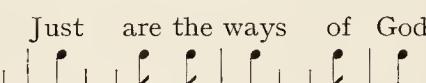
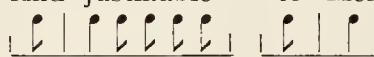
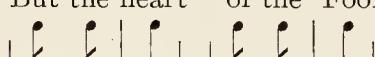
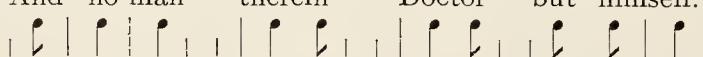

The rhythm almost dances again a little farther on where the emotion burns white :

O glorious strength  
  
 Put to the labour of a Beast.  


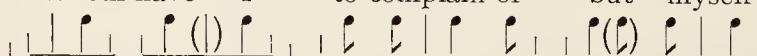
To express contempt Milton often uses a dancing, or a bitter sort of laughing rhythm :

Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him (40-1)  
  
 Eyeless in *Gaza* at the mill with slaves.  

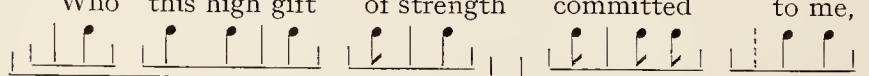
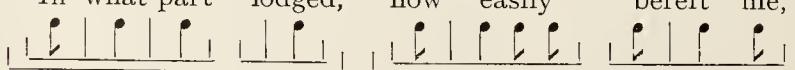

The same sort of rhythm has a curious effect when he is dogmatic as well as contemptuous :

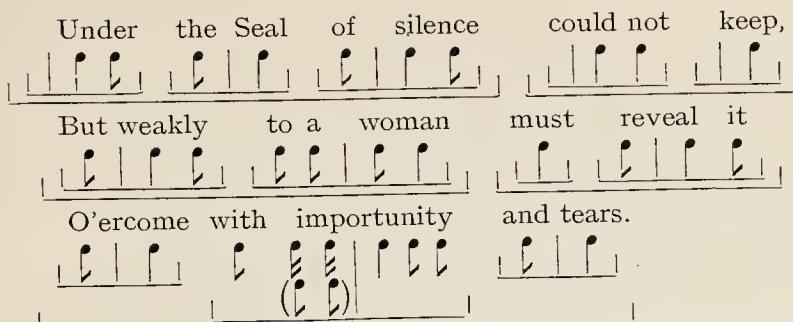
Just are the ways of God, (293)  
  
 And justifiable to Men.  
  
 For of such Doctrine never was there School, (297)  
  
 But the heart of the Fool,  
  
 And no man therein Doctor but himself.  


Line 46 is a beautiful example of the short triply-balanced rhythm :

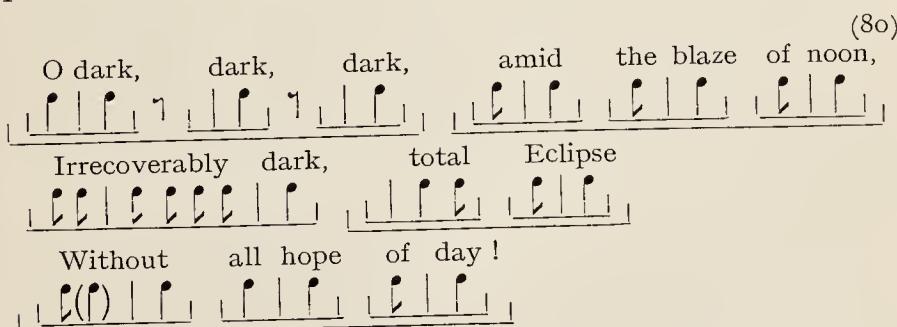
Whom have I to complain of but myself?  


The first section opens; the second presents a contrast and upsets the feeling of stability, which the last section restores by a modified repetition of the first. A rhythmic sentence of five-lines length follows :

Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
  
 In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,  


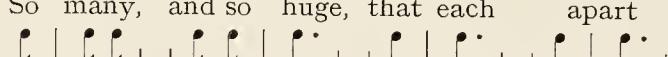
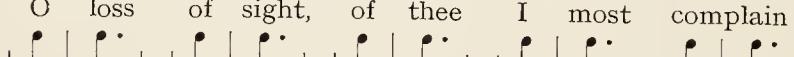


As usual in Milton the end-of-the-line-feeling is very strong, since each line ends with an answering, balancing phrase, but the rhythm does not come to rest till "tears". The first slow phrase is answered by a quick one which does not give us a sensation of finality; the second line repeats this contrast; the third reverses it; the fourth alters the rhythm to something more simple, still with no feeling of finality; the fifth gives us the close. It is not alone the sense that does it, as we can see if we tap the rhythm apart from the words. But who shall say how it is done? The last line alone is stable in itself. It is a complete triply-balanced rhythm—isolated iamb, followed by a distracting rhythm while another isolated iamb gives us a sense of solid finality. But wherein lies the innate fitness of this close for the rhythms preceding? This is another very expressive passage:

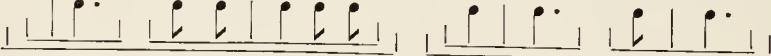
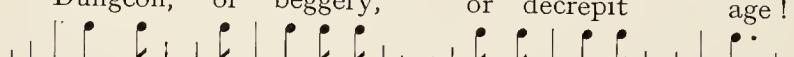


We start with three heavy monosyllabic (two at least are monosyllabic) feet, answered by three gentle iambs; then follows an agitated, restless phrase; the succeeding choriambic phrase makes us more restless; a dignified and smooth

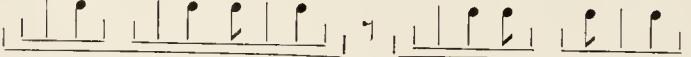
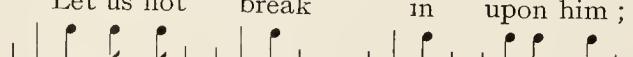
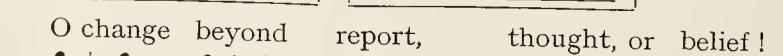
iambic phrase brings us to the close. In lines 66-7 we see an effective use of iambs :

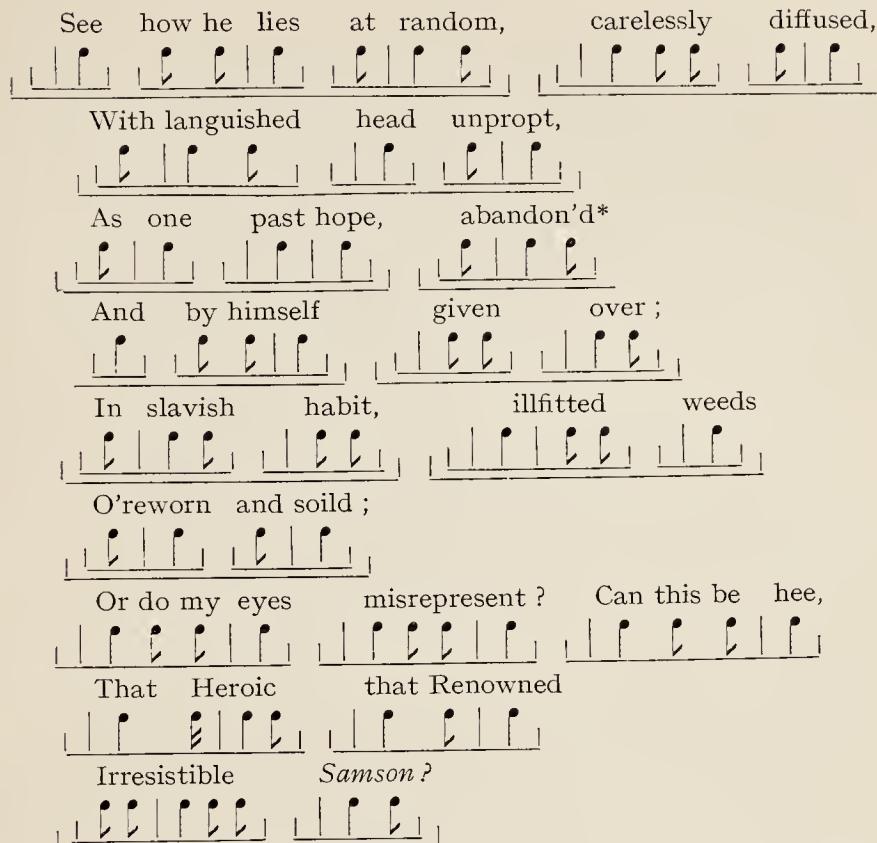
Suffixes that to me strength is my bane,  
  
 And proves the source of all my miseries ;  
  
 So many, and so huge, that each apart  
  
 Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,  
  
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !  


The long "long" makes this iamb heavy ; it does not dance with tripping feet. Incidentally this passage goes more or less into isochronous bars, hence, perhaps, its lyric quality. A contrasting, vigorous rhythm follows immediately, yet despite its sudden speed and vigour, with a certain congruousness :

Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,  
  
 Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !  


The chorus comes in at line 115 with a disjointed, exclamatory effect as of a crowd jostling :

This, this is he ; softly awhile,  
  
 Let us not break in upon him ;  
  
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief !  




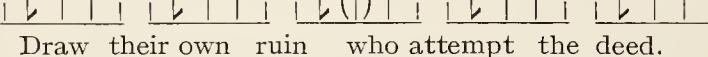
The choriambic feeling forces many of the accents and quantities—"and" of line 121, "or" perhaps, of line 124, "misrepresent"—not in opposition but in farther particularisation of the meaning. Most of the rhythms begin on a strong accent—the reason, probably, why we accent the "that"s of the second last line, which we could, and perhaps should, read without an accent. To the strong choriambic suggestion we possibly owe the cæsural feeling after "break" (second line). It balances something in this way: Before the rhythm started in the first two lines comes to a close, the third line bursts in with a changed rhythm; the phrases group so that the balance becomes steady after "unpropt" and "soild", the last three lines being very unstable and giddy. The repeated choriambics of

\* "abandoned" is part of the same phrase as "And by himself".

line 124 suggest a continuance of choriambics for ever, and a sequence of choriambics, like a sequence of dactyls, does not easily suggest a cadence in English. The balance is even more rocky in  ; it comes right with a sudden unexpected relief in "Irresistible Samson". Very beautiful, but a puzzle hardly to be solved by the old-fashioned scensions! The chorus comes in at line 1268 with another masterly change of rhythm. Samson is speaking :

Yet so it may fall out, because their end (1265)

 Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine

 Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHORUS.

Oh how comely it is and how reviving

 To the Spirits of just men long opprest !



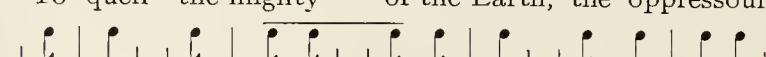
When God into the hands of their deliverer



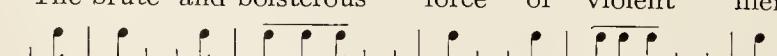
Puts invincible might



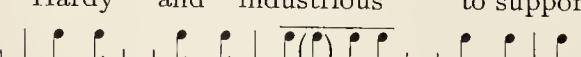
To quell the mighty of the Earth, the oppressour,



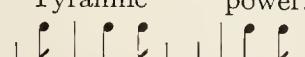
The brute and boisterous force of violent men



Hardy and industrious to support



Tyrannic power.



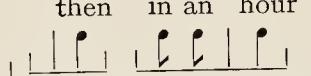
We notice how  $\text{I } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{}$  or  $\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{}$  echoes throughout. Many of the syllables forming these "shorts" could be read as long in another context, but somehow the whole spirit of the thing suggests the shorter values here. Another wonderful change of rhythm to mark the entry of the semi-chorus occurs at line 1669 :

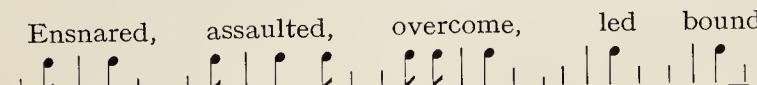
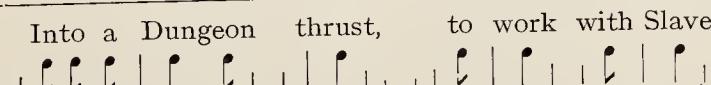
While their hearts were jocund and sublime,  
  
 Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine,  


The rhythm, too, is positively intoxicated, the turn from the  $\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{}$  foot to the  $\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{}$  gives us the sensation of a giddy whirl, helped partly by the change from the three-beat to the four-beat bar ; this gyration occurs again with the new modification of the rhythm to  $\text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{}$ ; the monosyllabic foot which starts off three of the phrases also helps the effect.

Besides knowing how to use rhythms to give character to the choral entries or the emotional outbursts, Milton knows how to make them realistic of the meaning. This hardly needs illustration. If it did, both his *Paradise* books and *Samson* might be quoted almost entire. But we cannot help revelling in a few instances from *Samson* :

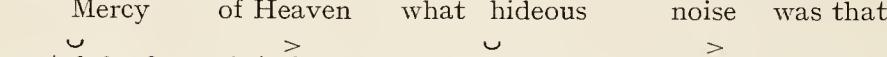
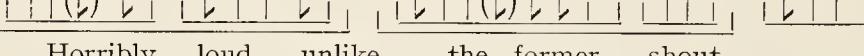
then in an hour (364)



Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
  
 Thy Foes derision, Captive, Poor, and Blind  
  
 Into a Dungeon thrust, to work with Slaves ?  


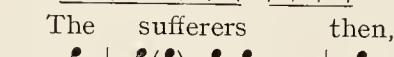
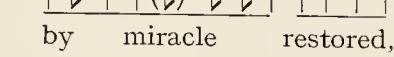
The different foot or phrase (where the *cæsura* is not too strong to allow a phrasal grouping) for each calamity, emphasises the variety of his suffering, ten catastrophes in succession, and not one of them in the same rhythm !

(1508)

I know your friendly minds and — O what noise !  
  
 Mercy of Heaven what hideous noise was that !  
  
 Horribly loud unlike the former shout.  


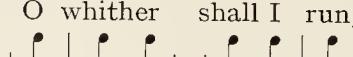
The | *†(b)* | *b b* | *†* phrase and its variants echo on in the succeeding lines in

(1523)

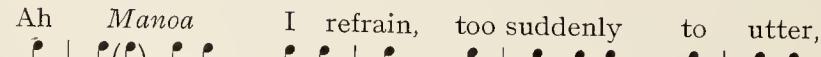
Philistines is fallen,  
  
 general cry,  
  
 The sufferers then,  
  
 by miracle restored,  


with a sort of shudder, especially if we allow the first accented syllable to be short. In line 1541, where the messenger arrives and gives us a detailed description, we hear it again :

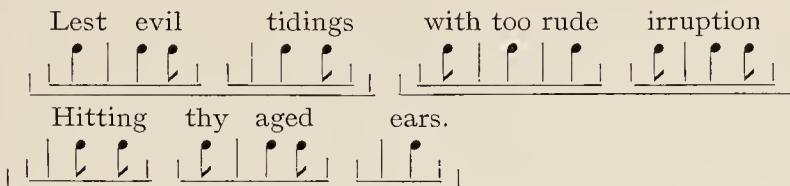
(1541)

O whither shall I run,  


and again at 1565 :

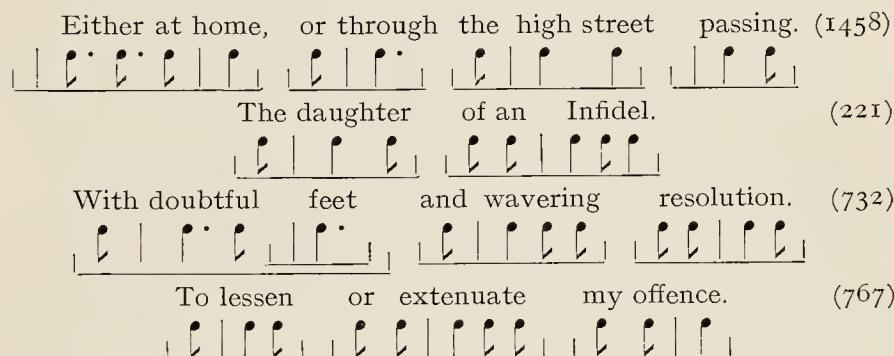
Ah Manoa I refrain, too suddenly to utter,  


and again :



where the *us*, *ds*, *p* and the *ts* especially, make it sound as if the teeth were chattering.

There are so many beautiful and wonderful rhythms in *Samson Agonistes* that it is difficult to see how the poem could ever have been thought unrhythymical, or referred to as austere by people who do not like austerity :



The result of Mr. Bridges' \* analysis of *Samson* is roughly this : The metre of *Samson Agonistes* is iambic with trochaic feet substituted even in the latter half of the line. Only 19 lines out of 1758 are in falling rhythm ; the rest are iambic, with free feet of '˘, and " weak places and ' elisions ' † and extra-metrical syllables at the end of the line, all such as we have in *Paradise Lost*." All dactylic and trochaic effects "are got by the placing of inversions, ‡ ' elisions ', etc." Lines 606 and 1668 are nine-syllabled, and would be ordinary iambs if the initial syllable were added ! Then there are

\* *Milton's Prosody*, pp. 34-5.

† Perhaps I should say that I write out all the printed contractions in Milton's text, e.g. "Heaven" for "Heav'n".

‡ Trochees instead of iambs.

twelve-syllabled lines or lines with six stresses.\* “ Some of them may be reduced to ten-syllable lines, by reckoning the last two syllables as extra-metrical.” He gives a similar sort of analysis for *Paradise Lost*. Summarised by Saintsbury it goes thus :

A typical blank verse line has ten syllables, five stresses and a rising rhythm. There may be an extra syllable or even two at the end of the line ; but Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, though not in *Comus*, does not allow it elsewhere, eliding where it seems to occur. . . . Some lines have only *four* and some probably only *three* stresses. There is in Milton much inverted † rhythm.‡

This is all right, I suppose. Milton was a classical scholar and knew all these technical feet in their own homes. He would have known what Bridges is talking about. But it does not follow that Milton thought in classical feet. He knew that, normally, the blank verse line had ten syllables and five iambic accents with perhaps a trochaic licence for the first foot and a licence if vowels came together. He would not know of Saintsbury’s equivalence rule, because Saintsbury was not yet born ; and yet is it not obvious to any honest, unprejudiced reader, that if this description of blank verse is right, *Paradise Lost* is only less than *Samson Agonistes* in *vers libre*? I do not mean to say that Milton set out to write *vers libre* ; he probably intended to give his verse the appearance of blank verse ; yet it is evident that he wrote with varying and various rhythmic tunes in his head and not with a  $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{e-}\acute{\text{t}}\text{u}\acute{\text{m}}$ , or even  $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{e-}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{e-}\acute{\text{t}}\text{u}\acute{\text{m}}$ , or  $\acute{\text{t}}\text{u}\acute{\text{m-}}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{e}$ ,  $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{e-}\acute{\text{t}}\text{u}\acute{\text{m}}$  pattern. Milton’s method in *Samson Agonistes* differs from that in the *Paradise* books only in being avowed. I do not believe one fourth of the feet in *Paradise Lost* are iambs, unless we allow feet to split up the words, and approve distorted accents and false quantities. Fleeming Jenkin,§ a

\* *Milton’s Prosody*, p. 40.

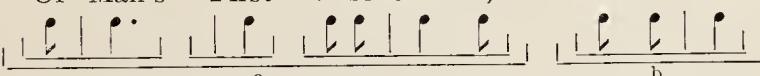
† Trochees instead of iambs.

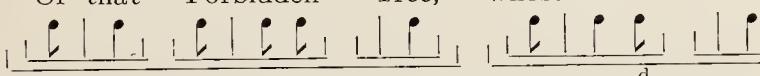
‡ *History of English Prosody*, Vol. II, pp. 258-9.

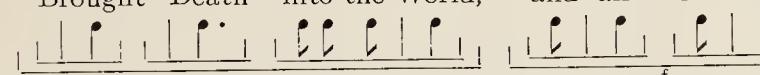
§ R. L. Stevenson’s Memoir Edition of *On Rhythm in English Verse*, pp. 163-4.

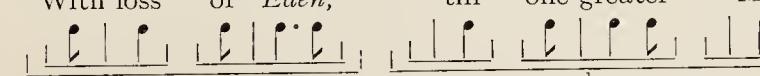
disinterested investigator, found on analysing a random 100 lines of Shakespeare and Milton and Pope, that 32 of Pope's lines were precisely in the type  $\text{u}/\text{u}/\text{u}/\text{u}/\text{u}$ , only 5 of Milton's and 3 of Shakespeare's, and this allowing the foot endings to come in the middle of words.

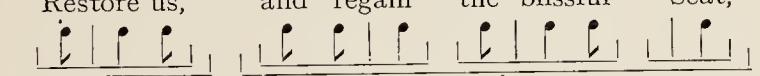
The first line—but enough has already been said of the first line of *Paradise Lost*. I should scan the beginning thus :

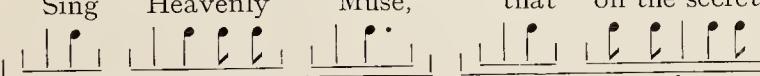
Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit  
  
 a b

Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste  
  
 c d

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,  
  
 e f

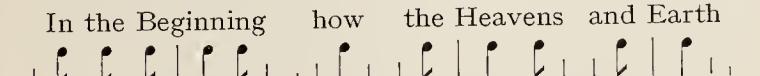
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
  
 g h

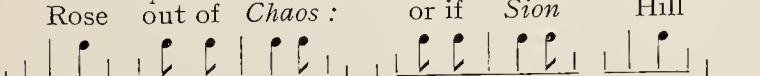
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,  
  
 i j

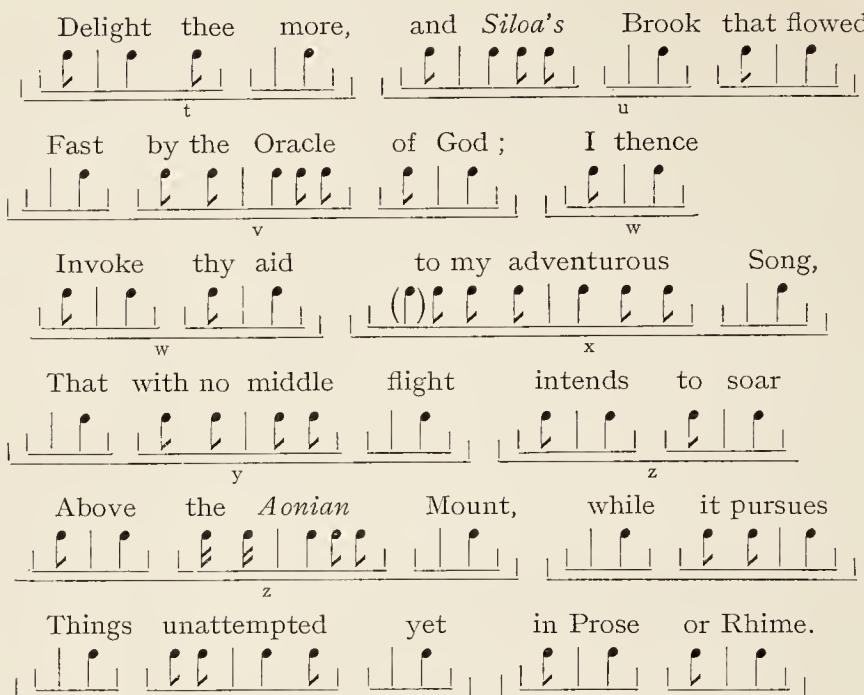
Sing Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top  
  
 k l

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
  
 m n

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,  
  
 m n

In the Beginning how the Heavens and Earth  
  
 p q

Rose out of Chaos : or if Sion Hill  
  
 r s



a and b group. c and d group. e and f group. g and h group. j, k, l, and m group. n, p, q, and r group. s and t group. u and v group. w, x, y and z group.

We can use our old argument again. The best things about Milton's prosody have been said in latent contradiction of the orthodox systems of scansion. Saintsbury \* and others have remarked how, in spite of the "self-moulded" lines of *Paradise Lost*, the rhythm is held in suspense till the close of the paragraph. When Saintsbury talks of the lines being "self-moulded" he does not mean that the meaning or grammatical sense is linear, but refers to the rhythmic feeling of the line as a complete entity in itself despite the continuity of the sense. The feeling of the paragraph structure is rhythmic too. This presupposes something in the structure of the rhythm which the orthodox blank verse theory does not explain. If iambs with substitution and equivalence explained all, there could be no contrast between "self-

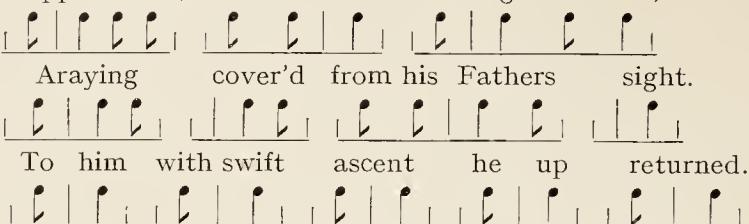
\* *History of English Prosody*, Vol. II, p. 270.

moulded" and "run on" lines, as all lines would, by hypothesis, be the same, moulded on one type; still less could there be a rhythmic paragraph-structure. Saintsbury is conscious of a rhythmic something not accounted for on his system. To analyse and explain this rhythmic something is not easy. I have marked and grouped the rhythms according to my feeling about it, which may or may not be right. What concerns me more is that the method should be granted—that the paragraph rhythm can be explained, or at least adequately described, by this method, though I may have made mistakes in examining the details. The lines are "self-moulded" till the fourth which swings round and ends in "Restore us"; that is to say, each line, save the first, starts from a half-finished rhythm and ends where the answering phrase achieves a half balance. "Restore us" sounds the end of a farther grouping, where the rhythm is unified, almost culminated and brought to a point. The next phrase feels as if it were going to form a sort of *coda* ending the thing, when "Sing Heavenly Muse" breaks in with a fresh start and a new impetus, cutting across the unfinished rhythm. Similar to the break at "Restore us" but feebler, are those after "That Shepherd", "Chaos", and "God". The rhythm of w and x and y and z remains incomplete and continuous. Thus x does not answer w but leads on; y does not answer, we are still expectant; z is not strong enough to balance the whole, though it answers y; not till we get to "Mount" do we come to the end of that grouping of phrases. A choriamb + a choriambic and iambic phrase + two iambs wind off the rhythm. We need not illustrate other rhythms of the sort. Until we know that the principle is going to be allowed, this sort of excursion feels very solitary; we shall rather turn to consider something else.

So far is *Paradise Lost* from being really iambic that a real iambic line can occur with most striking effect:

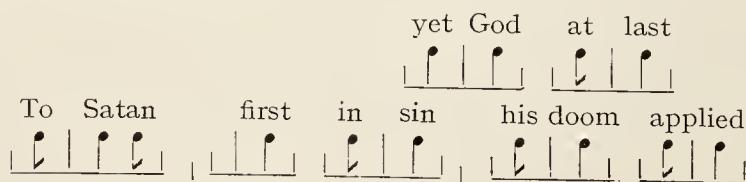
Nor hee thir outward onely with the Skins  
 Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more  
 Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,

(220)



Araying cover'd from his Fathers sight.  
 To him with swift ascent he up returned.

The sudden lightening, the swift, easy movement of the iambic, after the heavy, lumpish rhythm of the two preceding lines, gives us the nearest we have ever got to our idealised imagination of the sensation of flight ; we have felt it before only in dreams. It seems to me a travesty to take as the typical line of the poem, one that can give such an altogether amazing, out-of-the-way effect—an effect due to no chance, but to either deliberate skill or marvellous intuition, rather I think to skill than to intuition. As argument to back this, we need only refer to the number of times Milton reflects his meaning in his rhythms. Although it does not require illustration, let us look at one very interesting example, where we have something paralleling the *Samson Agonistes* change of rhythm to indicate a change of speaker. Many must have been struck by the likeness of *Samson Agonistes* rhythms to those of *Paradise Lost*. It would be difficult to find any new technique in *Samson Agonistes* that has not sprung from the *Paradise* books. Though the changes of rhythm in *Samson* to indicate entries of the chorus was learnt from an older art than *Paradise Lost*, we have it forecasted there also. Without any doubt this was deliberate in *Samson*, and with equally little doubt I think, in this passage from *Paradise Lost*, book X :

yet God at last  


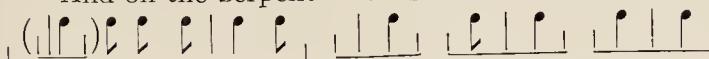
To Satan first in sin his doom applied

EXAMPLES OF RESULTING PROSODY 147

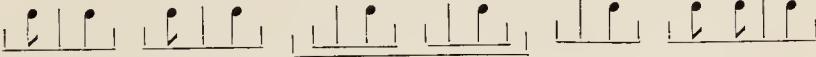
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:



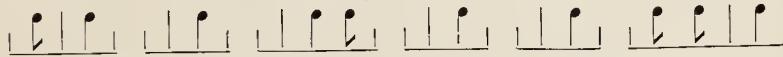
And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall.



Because thou hast done this, thou art accus'd  
(175)



Above all Cattel, each Beast of the Field;



Upon thy Belly groveling thou shalt goe,



And dust shalt eat all the days of thy Life.



Between Thee and the Woman I will put



Enmitie, and between thine and her Seed;



Her Seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.



So spake this Oracle, then verified  
(182)



When Jesus son of Mary second Eve,



Saw Satan fall like Lightning down from Heaven,



Prince of the Aire; then rising from his Grave



Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumpht



In open shew, and with ascension bright



Captivity led captive through the Aire,  
 The Realme it self of Satan long usurpt,  
 Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;  
 Even he who now foretold his fatal bruise,  
 And to the Woman thus his Sentence turned.

Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply

(193)

By thy Conception; Children thou shalt bring

In sorrow forth, and to thy Husbands will  
 Thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule.

On *Adam* last thus judgment he pronounced.

Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy Wife,

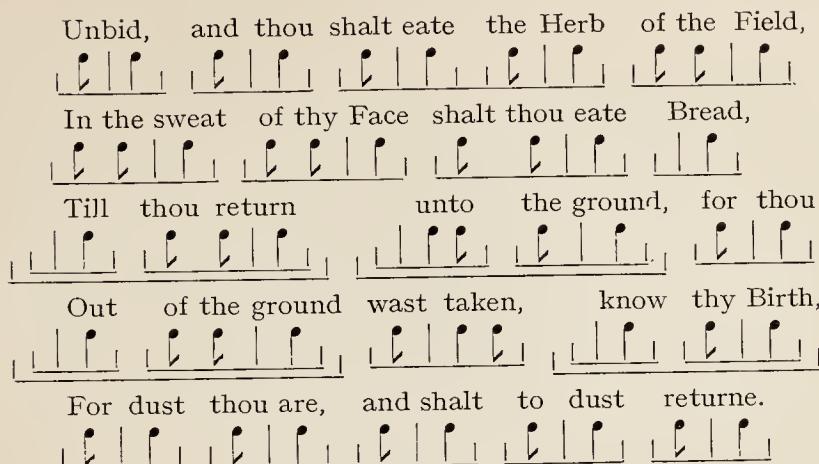
And eaten of the Tree concerning which

I charged thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat thereof,

Cursed is the ground for thy sake, thou in sorrow

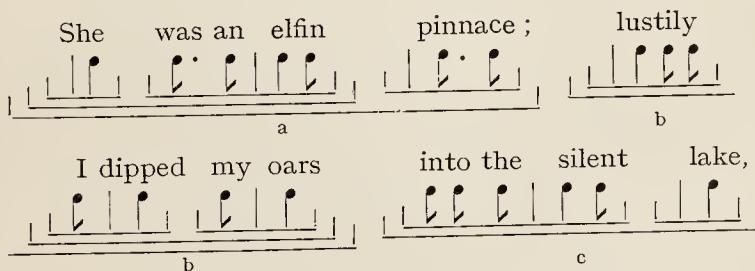
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy Life;

Thornes also and Thistles it shall bring thee forth



The curses are, on the whole, in a different rhythm from the context, tending to anapaestic, to the dancing contemptuous rhythms of *Samson*. Before line 175 and after line 208, and even in the few lines between the cursing (182-92), the metre feels different, and on the most casual reading. Milton must have done it deliberately ; he must have known that he was not writing in “unrhymed iambic pentametre”, but in rhythms that were free, admitting any amount of variety. For some reason, perhaps to convey a statute patter, a sort of rigmarole decree, or merely because these rhythms seemed suitable to “this Oracle”, \* he wished to point its speech by a contrasting rhythm.

If we come back to Milton’s pupil and take a random sample of Wordsworth’s blank verse, we feel the contrast very strongly :



\* Some of them come straight from *Genesis*, and some resemble rhythms in the first chapter of The Gospel according to St. Luke.

And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat

Went heaving through the water like a swan;

When, from behind that craggy steep till then

The horizon's bound, a huge peak,

As if with voluntary power instinct

Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,

And growing still in stature the grim shape

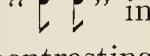
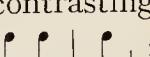
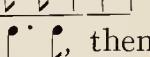
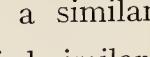
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,

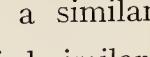
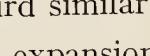
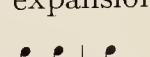
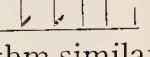
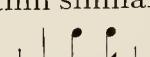
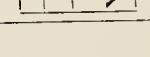
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own

And measured motion like a living thing,

Strode after me.\*

\* *Prelude*, I, 373.

The whole feeling is different. We are very conscious again of the feminine phrase endings, the tendency of the feet to disappear within the phrase, and of the other things we noticed before as characteristic of our poet. The swing of the rhythm is shorter, and the lines are not "self-moulded". The phrases group abc, def, ghijk, lmnopqrs, the full balance of the whole rhythmic sentence being with the sense. Milton's rhythm makes its effect by vivid contrast and echo. In this from Wordsworth the contrasts are delicate and the rhythmic repetitions do not echo; the material of the rhythm, too, is smoother and less vigorous. Milton's begins \*  ; the following phrase echoes  ; the third is  with the "" in a new place. A double iamb follows, then a contrasting phrase resembling the first,  ; after this comes a double iamb and  , then  and  .

In Wordsworth the rhythm starts falling,†  ; and is followed by a similar phrase,  ; and a third similar,  . The next grouping is an expansion of the same rhythmic idea,  . Then comes a change of attack leading into a rhythm similar to that of the first phrase,  ;  , ending with  like a swan,

a smoother cadence than

Restore us.



\* *Paradise Lost*, line 1.

† "She was an elfin pinnace", etc.

Wordsworth's phrases lead on not so much by balance asking for more balance in Milton's elaborate way, as by a continuous though varied imitation, not because a disturbing phrase upsets the balance and leads on to a stabilising phrase so much as through a quiet maze. The phrases are put together cumulatively rather than organically ; the rhythm is kept from a close because nothing brings it to rest, rather than because something prevents it. It has not the heavy power of Milton's method, but sounds sweet and simple ; the material that makes it coherent is subtle and silent.

Another random extract from the *Prelude* \* illustrates the rhythm which Saintsbury approves, the iambic, though on our scanning it starts rather trochaic :

A freshness also found I at this time

In human Life, the daily life of those

Whose occupations really I loved ;

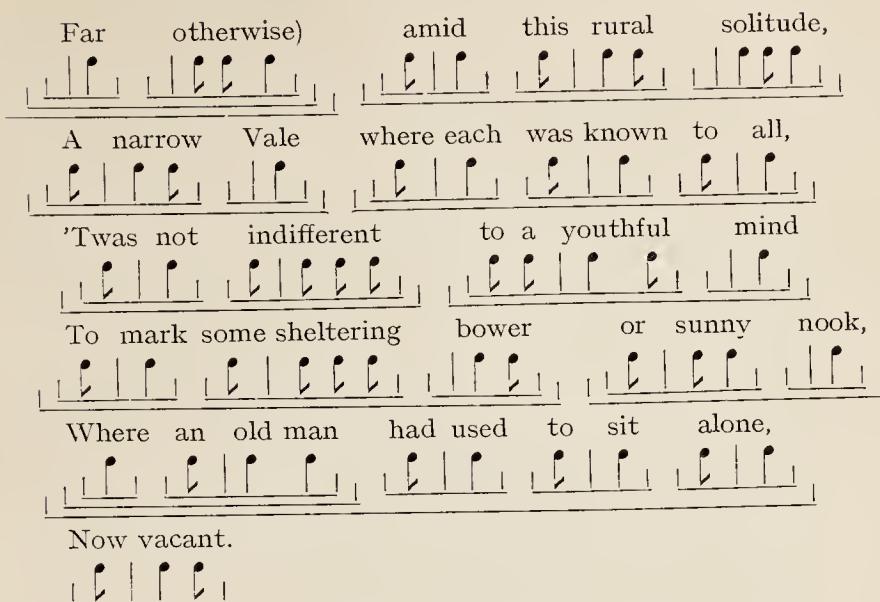
The peaceful scene oft filled me with surprise

Changed like a garden in the heat of spring,

After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit

The things which were the same and yet appeared

\* Book IV, 191.



The first four lines differ from Pope's in that the phrases balance by threes—abc, def, then gh and ijk ; “with” and perhaps “at” have the false quantity we allowed for the eighteenth century, where Wordsworth served his metrical apprenticeship ; for, in spite of his individuality, we do sometimes remember that Pope was the first big name behind him, as we occasionally see Milton in him.

Whereas the phrasing in lyric stanzas or couplets of stereotyped form is necessarily little varied, it would be granted pretty generally that of all forms, blank verse admits most variety, and that in it the poet's individuality tends to come out most. In text-book technicality it is limited only to a line of five iambs with no rhyme. We have seen that in actual use, poets do not adhere to even these rules. It is the *vers libre* of the middle ages and a little later. The “single-moulded” line blank verse is as real and recognisable a form as the couplet, and distinct from *vers libre*. *Paradise Lost* tends to this type. Yet even *Paradise Lost* has passages not distinguishable from *vers libre*. Or at least I do not know how to distinguish the rhythm of that curse passage we quoted, from modern *vers libre*. And, indeed, its rhythm

is perhaps more easily grasped written in the modern fashion than in the quasi blank-verse style :

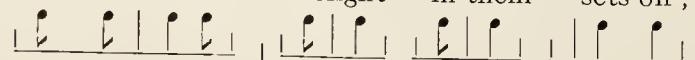
Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife  
 And eaten of the tree  
 Concerning which  
 I charged thee,  
 Saying :  
 Thou shalt not eat thereof,  
 Cursed is the ground for  
 Thy sake.  
 Thou in sorrow  
 Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life :  
 Thorns also and thistles  
 It shall bring thee forth  
 Unbid,  
 And thou shalt eat the herb of the field,  
 In the sweat of thy face  
 Shalt thou eat bread,  
 Till thou return  
 Unto the ground,  
 For thou  
 Out of the ground wast taken,  
 Know thy birth,  
 For dust thou art,  
 And shalt to dust return.

As far as I know, only one blank verse is nearer to modern *vers libre*, if that is possible—Shakespeare's in his latest plays. In Milton we are, as a rule, more or less conscious of the line, we rarely lose it long enough to forget it, but there are passages in Shakespeare where we have no rhythmic consciousness of the line.\* What we hear is :

1. There be some sports are painful,

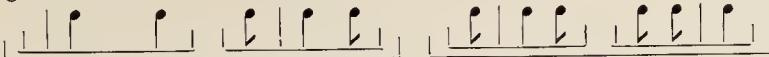


2. And their labour \* delight in them sets off ;

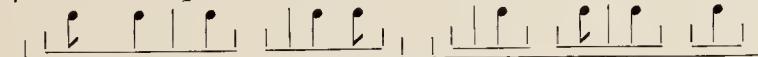


\* Lanier (*The Science of English Verse*, p. 235), noticing this, suggests printing it as prose. I think we should print it as Shakespeare wrote it, and for a reason given in *Sound and Meaning in English Poetry*.

3. Some kinds of baseness \* are nobly undergone,



4. And most poor matters \* point to rich ends,



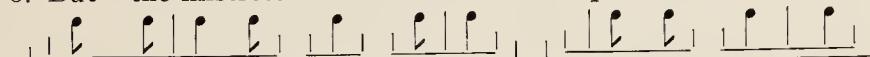
5. This my mean task \* would be as heavy to me



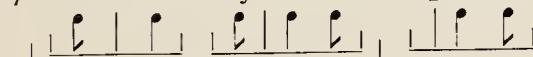
as odious;



6. But \* the mistress which I serve quickens what's dead \*



7. And makes my labours pleasures:



8. Oh! she is \* ten time more gentle than her father's



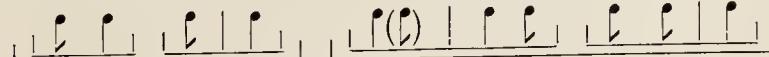
crabbed,\*



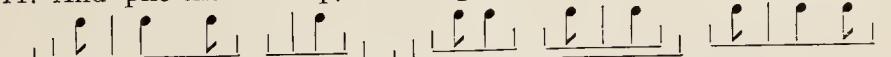
9. And he's composed of harshness.



10. I must remove \* some thousands of these logs



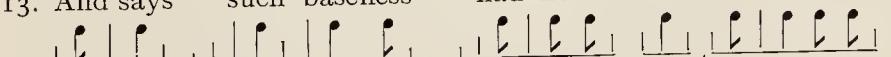
11. And pile them up,\* upon a sore injunction:



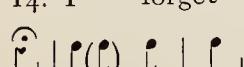
12. My sweet mistress \* weeps when she sees me work,



13. And says such baseness \* had never like executor.



14. I forget \*:



15. But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,\*

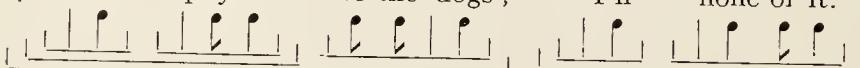


16. Most busy least when I do it.\* †

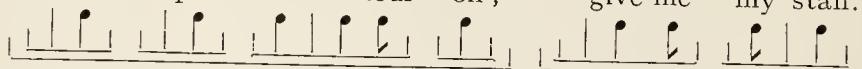


Though irregular, it is yet rhythmic. The coherence is maintained partly by iteration of like feet, by variations of the “| ♫ | ♫” and the trochaic effects, and by other similarities. The rhythm does not go in paragraphs like Milton’s, or even Wordsworth’s. Its effect is agglutinative; it progresses by addition not by evolution. Nevertheless, the phrases do group together; the rhythms play upon each other. The first four lines (ours) balance within themselves, and group together. The fifth and sixth also balance internally and answer each other. The seventh is an addition to them. The eighth is a complete rhythm in itself, and the ninth is an addition recalling the seventh. The tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth are all internally balanced, and answer in couplets. These couplets are not a rhythmic sequence, merely separate rhythms added together; yet though there is nothing organic in them, they are related and similar, not promiscuous. We find this even more in passages like the following, where we can see the disjointed phrases turning into the woven rhythm of the last three phrases :

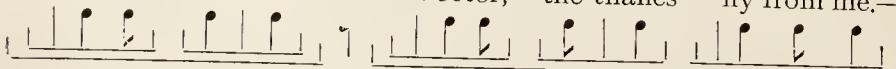
Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.



Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.

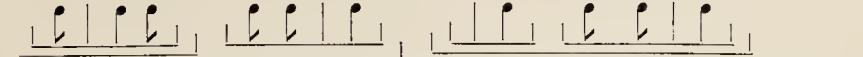


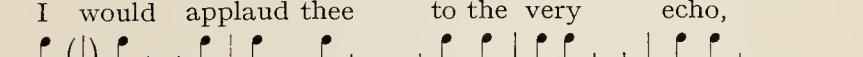
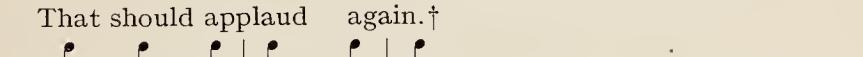
Seyton, send out. — Doctor, the thanes fly from me.—



† *Tempest*, III, i. i. The asterisks mark the last word of the written line.

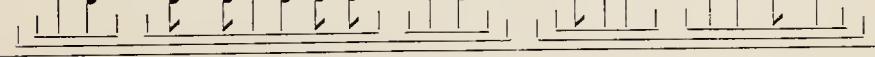
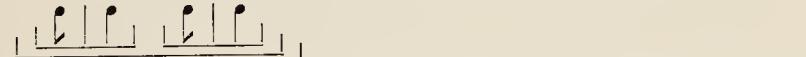
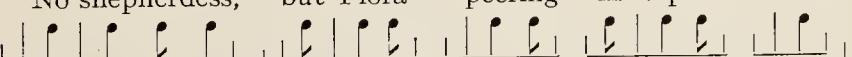
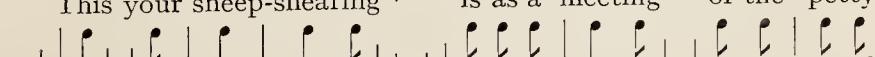
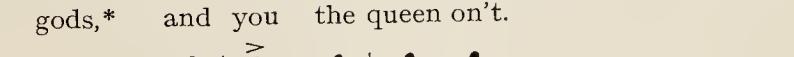
Come, sir, despatch, — If thou couldst, doctor, cast  

  
 The water of my land, find her disease,  

  
 And purge it to a sound and pristine health,  

  
 I would applaud thee to the very echo,  

  
 That should applaud again.†  


Even in these disjointed fits, the rhythms are related. Let us take one last example :

Florizel :

These your unusual weeds to each part of you\*  

  
 do give a life ;  

  
 No shepherdess, but Flora \* peering in April's front.  

  
 This your sheep-shearing \* is as a meeting of the petty  

  
 gods,\* and you the queen on't.  


Perdita :

Sir, my gracious lord,\* to chide at your extremes  

  
 it not becomes me :\*  


† *Macbeth*, V, 3. 47.

O ! pardon, that I name them.



Your high self,\* the gracious mark o' the land,



You have obscured \* with a swain's wearing,



And me, poor lowly maid,\* most goddess-like



prack'd up.



But that our feasts \* in every mess have folly,



And the feeders \* digest it with a custom,



I should blush \* to see you so attired,



Sworn, I think,\* to show myself a glass.†



Again, it is an aggregation of similar rhythms. It begins with a triply-balanced rhythm, followed by a two-phrased, then a triply-formed one similar in the form of its first and last phrases to those of the first line, then another three-phrased followed by a two-phrased rhythm, and so on. Coherence comes rather from the similarity of the stuff than by a sense of the whole in the detailed arrangement. There is a sense of the proportion of the whole, the total effect is artistic and complete and balanced, but it is a rhythm rather of skilful juxtaposition than of skilful moulding. In the *Paradise Lost* rhythms the significance of the part consists in being an organic piece of the whole ; Milton's phrases are

† *Winter's Tale*, IV, 3. 1. Asterisks mark the end of the printed line.

rhythmical because the whole is rhythmic. Shakespeare's whole is rhythmical because the individual parts are. The paragraph feeling colours Milton's phrases ; Shakespeare's phrase rhythms give character to his rhythmic paragraphs, where, or if, we may talk of such. This difference is more than æsthetic ; it is prosodic, matter of fact, not of imagination ; it is one which we all feel and which all literary appreciation seizes on, and ought to be explained or at least accounted for in any system of prosody.

This is only a thimbleful sample of the ocean ; our business is not to write a complete prosody. Even the analyses are perfunctory, made rather to indicate the method, than as giving the last verdict. It is enough if we have shown that the old prosodies are not sufficient, that the best prosodians of these methods burst their jacket. The conventional prosodies do not represent realities and are not nearly close enough to poetic experience. The only way of achieving a new system is to have symbols representing facts, and to examine and discuss such facts. I believe there is a latent system, half implied, in these pages, but I have not tried to formalise it, partly because I distrust systems, partly because such an attempt would be off the main track of this investigation.



## APPENDIX I.

(See p. 10.)

BESIDES the usual variations in speed,

the composer, in response to emotional stimulus, may vary the dimension of what is realised in one intuitive act of thought. . . . After having established the tempo of his work [he] may alter his thought so that it is expressed in bars and beats either longer or shorter than the original.\*

These are called *augmentation* and *diminution* respectively. As an example McEwen gives among others :



the last bar being really



—SCHUBERT, *Sonata in A*, Op. 143.

(McEwen's barring makes no difference to how the melody is played.)

Analogous to these effects [he says] are the modifications in the length of the poetic line. . . . The terminal accent . . . is the most strongly accented part of the line, and the effect of rhyme is to emphasise and increase the natural accent.

When we have middle rhymes, he tells us the effect is to quicken the measure, *i.e.* diminish the unit of speed as in music.† His examples are not convincing. He gives :

\* McEwen, *The Thought in Music*, p. 132.

† *Ibid.*, p. 137, footnote.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
 From the land of mist and snow,  
 The spirit slid : and it was he  
 That made the ship to go.  
 The sails at *noon* left off their *tune*,  
 And the ship stood still also.

I don't know that the effect of the internal rhyme is to quicken either the speed or the unit of speed. Undoubtedly an added emphasis is given to "noon" as to B $\sharp$  in the music, but to make the parallel exactly right we should have to read the syllables of the internally-rhymed line more quickly than those of the other lines. The difference made by the rhyme is one of new phrasing, rather an altering of the weight of the emphasis, than a quickening of the speed. Indeed, we naturally tend to read the line more slowly to bring out its full music and also to realise the meaning. The ship that has been racing ahead stops here. The internal rhyme breaks the going, sliding motion of the verse, pulls it up. The speed of the thought slackens and is farther arrested in the next line by the *sh*, *st* alliteration. Instead of diminution of the unit of speed, this looks much more like an *augmentation*. All the same, Mr. Raymond tells us that :

It is characteristic of rhyming words to emphasise strongly the ideas expressed through them. They convey the impression, therefore, that something important has been said ; and if they occur frequently they suggest that many important things have been said, and said in a short time or—what is equivalent to this—that the thought in the poem is moving rapidly.\*

McEwen's poetic example of *augmentation* is equally unhappy. He gives this for a musical one : †



\* *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music*, p. 60.

† *The Thought in Music*, p. 135.

noticing that A is really



the poetic parallel being :

I've seen the smiling  
Of Fortune beguiling ;  
I've felt all its favours, and found its decay ;  
Sweet was its blessing,  
Kind its caressing,  
But now it is fled—it is fled far away. \*

Here again the difference is rather in the phrasing than in the speed ; the individual syllables do not move more slowly, as the notes in the musical examples do. In a sense the longer line does prolong the cadence, but we should have a much closer musical analogy, and come much nearer the facts, if we described the short lines as two *two-bar phrases*, answered by the long line, or one *four-bar phrase*. It is difficult to find a poetic analogy, because of the essential difference that in poetry each word alters the thought. We have a stricter parallel to *augmentation* if we say, “He has come”, at an ordinary rate, then repeat slowly and emphatically, “He—has—come”. Here we have the same thought repeated with an augmentation of meaning. Yet still the analogy is not strict ; in music the thought is not repeated but continued ; it is not a more emphatic iteration, but a broadening out of the continuous fluid of the thought. Perhaps in fairness to McEwen, we should say that he makes the analogy light-heartedly, as a sort of simile to illustrate his musical statement, and for his purpose the comparison is presumably close enough, though his excursion into poetic prosody does not read like a figure of speech.

\* *The Thought in Music*, p. 138.

## APPENDIX II.

(See p. 84.)

MR. McEWEN,\* who explains rhythm on the pendulum theory, accounts for the prevalence of “rising” over “falling” rhythm in music, by saying that the initial upbeat is the motion of the pendulum from the “mean centre”. We find another, most curious explanation, that rising rhythm is the more common because we inspire before expiring.† Omord, more to our point, tells us that

English sentences most frequently begin with an unimportant word such as “And” or “Of” or “The”. English lines of verse naturally do the same.‡

or, as Mark Liddell has it :

English forms of thinking are almost invariably pre-positive for qualified nominal notions, and post-positive for qualified verbal notions [*i.e.* adjectives precede the noun and adverbs follow the verb]; the most emotional nouns for poetry are either stressed monosyllables or have stress on the first syllable; the commonest adjectives are monosyllabic. So also we end with verb and monosyllabic object, or verb and monosyllabic adverb. Thus it is difficult to write falling rhythm in English; it necessitates abnormal inversions of ideation, or the too frequent use of polysyllabic words at the verse ends.§

The true explanation must be psychological. English sentences begin with an unimportant word because the English

\* *The Thought in Music*, pp. 40-1.

† M. Lussy, *Le Rhythme Musical*, abridged and translated by Fowles : “Short Treatise on Musical Rhythms”, pp. 5-6.

‡ *A Study of Metre*, p. 62.

§ *Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, p. 26. I have simplified the wording a little.

method of thinking is towards emphasis. It is easier to step up to an accent physically, or an emphasis psychologically, than to start by attacking it, less of an effort, the more leisurely and therefore more English and musical way. We must, however, remember to get discount from Mark Liddell ; he always overestimates a little. Writing trochaic measures in English is not " that " difficult (if we may use a lovely idiom). Most of our two-syllabled words are trochaic. " Mary had a little lamb ", or, without *catalexis*, " Mary, Mary, quite contrary ", do not betray " abnormal inversions of ideation ". Young says :

When we begin with the feeble sound, we pass easily and gently from it to the strong sound. We utter the strong sound without much exertion and can dwell upon it for some time. On the contrary, when the strong sound comes first we express it with more difficulty and force, and pass to the succeeding feeble sound with more rapidity. Hence trochaics have been generally reckoned somewhat quicker in their movement than iambics and more proper for expressing vehemence and gaiety.\*

Sievers has another explanation. He says that the falling rhythm is always falling, *i.e.* even the strong beat takes part in the general decrescendo ; on the other hand, the rising remains constant in general, therefore the strong beat stands out more in contrast with the unstressed and inclines particularly to over-lengthening. Scientific measurements give conflicting results. Apparently sometimes the iamb is the quicker foot, sometimes the trochee. Mr. Stetson says :

A number of measurements by different observers show that in the iambic foot the unaccented syllable is proportionally much shorter than the unaccented syllable in the trochaic foot.†

He concludes that in the iamb the beat is strengthened and we have a " limiting sensation ", whereas in the trochee the relaxation process and not the beat is intensified, which

\* *The Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, Vol. II, p. 77, " On Rhythmic Measures ".

† *Harvard Psychological Studies*, 1903, Vol. I, p. 460, " Rhythm and Rhyme ".

“may be the reason for its peculiar, buoyant, vigorous and non-final character”. Messrs. Hurst and Mackay’s experiments, quoted by Scripture in *Elements of Experimental Phonetics*,\* give a different result, the ratios being for the iamb  $\cup : - = 1 : 2$ , for the trochee  $- : \cup = 1.5 : 1$ . Omord † notices that the results of Messrs. Triplett and Sanford also disagree with those of Hurst and Mackay. Anapæsts and dactyls likewise are inconsistent. For the anapæst Scripture quotes Hurst and Mackay thus:  $\cup : \cup : - = 1 : 1 : 1.2$ , for the dactyl  $- : \cup : \cup = 1.6 : 1 : 1$ ; Stetson ‡ says: “The accented syllable of the anapæst is much longer in proportion than that of the dactyl.” These results from measurements of poetry read in laboratory experiments seem to show that the time relations of iambs and trochees, anapæsts and dactyls are not always the same. Prof. Raymond’s speculations on matters of this sort are interesting, his facts being not so much scientific as the result of observations on poetry and music. It is characteristic of him to discover what may be perfectly true, and either state it from a wrong angle (*i.e.* wrong from our point of view) or give illustrations not to the point. He says:

If both the accented and unaccented syllables are short in quantity the movement is rapid, indicating . . . thought that is *unimportant*. If both the accented and unaccented syllables are long, the movement is slow, indicating thought that is *important*. §

The converse of both these statements is true, and is possibly the real axiom. The pace is rapid in both unaccented and accented syllables if the thought is rapid, as in Shelley’s *Cloud*, and slow in both accented and unaccented syllables

\* P. 538. “The subject recited poems representing each of the four usual meters, iambus, trochee, dactyl and anapest, while he beat in unison with the finger on a pointer which registered the lengths of the beats on a smoked drum”.

† *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 231.

‡ *Harvard Psychological Studies*, Vol. I, p. 461, “Rhythm and Rhyme”.

§ *Poetry as a Representative Art*, p. 52.

if the thought is heavy—more or less. Miss Dabney \* also generalises from literary impression ; she says that anapæsts and dactyls are rhythms of motion, iambs and trochees of reflection. Guest says :

The smaller the number of accents the more rapid the verse ; hence triple metres [*i.e.* dactyls and anapæsts] are more suited to light themes than common [*i.e.* iambs and trochees].

“ Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright.”

—SCOTT, *Monastery*, Chap. V.

As accent requires muscular exertion verse is more energetic the more accents there are ; hence as rhythm approaches common measures it is more energetic, especially if it begin and end with an accented syllable.

“ Quit the plough, the loom, the mine.” †

These quotations are not *verbatim*, being altered to save time.

\* *The Musical Basis of Verse*, p. 66.

† *History of English Rhythms*, pp. 162-3.



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